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A  
D E F E N C E  
OF THE  
STADTHOLDERSHIP.

[PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.]







A  
D E F E N C E  
*of the*  
STADTHOLDERSHIP;

WHEREIN THE  
NECESSITY OF THAT OFFICE IN THE UNITED  
PROVINCES IS DEMONSTRATED;

AND THE  
DESIGNS AND CONDUCT OF THE PARTY THAT  
OPPOSES IT ARE EXAMINED,

WITH A  
R E V I E W  
OF THE

PERNICIOUS CONSEQUENCES THAT HAVE ATTENDED  
THE ALLIANCES AND CONNECTIONS OF THE  
UNITED PROVINCES WITH FRANCE; AND THE  
DANGERS TO WHICH THEY ARE EXPOSED FROM THEIR  
PRESENT SITUATION.

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By JOHN ANDREWS, LL.D.

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STADTHOLDERSHIP, &c.

A WRITER of the last Century, in describing the political character of the Dutch, differs greatly from those who represented them as a united people. Far from deserving such an epithet, they resembled, in his opinion, a body with seven heads, none of which looked the same way.

THE internal divisions which have at several periods agitated that Commonwealth, prove the justness of his assertion; and how truly it was said by some judicious politician, not long after it had succeeded in throwing off the yoke of Spain, that the success of such an undertaking was much more owing to the circumstances of Europe, the dread and jealousy entertained of the Spanish power and designs, and to the open or secret

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assistance derived from every one of its neighbours, than to the efforts produced by its unanimity.

WE need not however be surprised at this spirit of discord among the Dutch. It is woven into the very principles of their constitution; if such a name can with any propriety be given to an assemblage of different governments, each of them varying from the others in several respects, and perfectly independent in the management of such affairs as only concern their particular district.

THE fact was, that the Dutch had no other object in view at first, than to deliver themselves from tyranny. They united together from that sole motive; and while that subsisted in its full and primitive force, it answered all the purposes of the strictest and best concerted scheme of confederacy.

NOR are the Dutch to be blamed for looking no further at that critical period. In the midst of war, and the confusion which it unavoidably occasions, a people struggling for liberty, or, to speak more properly, for a deliverance from oppression, are not at leisure to examine with much accuracy the best possible form of government which they might adopt. They are satisfied with any one that will afford them protection from present evils, and are very willing to put off to a future opportunity, the consideration of that system of domestic government which might suit them best.

THE most judicious of those who have given their opinions on this subject, agree in disapproving the principles on which the Republic of the Seven United Provinces is founded. They came together in times of trouble and pressure, and as their union was formed with hurry and precipitation, it partook of the turbulence and disorder which gave it birth.

A COUNTRY situated like Holland in the midst of formidable Powers, with whom it is continually obliged to keep up a communication, required a form of government able to act occasionally with dispatch, and wherein the general will should not be obstructed with facility; but the very reverse of such a system was established.

HAD it not been for the extraordinary abilities of the celebrated William, Prince of Orange, never would the Dutch Commonwealth have had an existence. To this wonderful man alone it owed its deliverance and preservation from the miseries it had experienced, and was still threatened with. Never was a more capacious mind and resolute heart displayed than in the design he formed to free his country, and erect it into an independent sovereignty. His resources were few and precarious; the obstacles he had to surmount were many and certain: the only circumstances in his favour were, the oppression and discontent of the inhabitants. But notwithstanding the ill usage they had received, their character was to be

materially altered, before he could bring them to resent it in the manner he proposed. They had been till this epocha of a quiet peaceable disposition; he was now to transform them into an active and warlike people, intolerant of injuries, and impatient for revenge. With the slender revenues of a few desolated provinces, and with a nation hitherto unused to war, he had to encounter the immense treasures, and the numerous and well-disciplined armies of the greatest monarchy in Christendom. This arduous task was accomplished by the superiority of his genius; this furnished him with the means of overcoming all difficulties: equally great in the council and in the field, with one hand he repelled the attacks of the enemy, and with the other he laid the foundation of the Commonwealth which he had projected, and cemented at last with his blood.

THE motives that animated this celebrated Prince in the enterprize which he so gloriously achieved, have been variously represented. Enmity to his family, and to an office so necessary to the welfare of Holland as that which he exercised, has induced the Republican, or rather the Aristocratic party in Holland, and its friends and abettors the French, to represent the views of this Prince as far from disinterested. Under the pretext of opposing the tyranny of Spain, he aspired at the sovereignty of the two Provinces of Holland and Zealand, and to become the dicta-  
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tor of the others, under the denomination of their Stadtholder : but when we consider the improbability of his compassing such an intent, without the free consent, and even the desire of the people, it is hardly credible that so wise and prudent a politician would have formed it. The power he already possessed in right of his great qualities, of the services he had rendered his country, and of the indispensable need in which it hourly stood of his abilities, was a sufficient elevation for a man, who knew so well as he did, how to appreciate the worth of greatness, and in what it really consisted.

BUT it is not against him alone the shafts of malice and jealousy have been directed. His posterity has felt them equally ; and it is very remarkable, that the faction in Holland which has so long been hostile to the House of Orange, has constantly found the strongest support and countenance from France.

YET nothing is clearer, than that the prosperity of the Dutch was chiefly owing to the valour and military talents of the Princes of that illustrious Family. The office of Stadtholder was, from the commencement of the Republic, considered as part of the constitution. Though not viewed as a sovereign, he stood in the necessary light of head and guardian of the State. The two sons of William, Mauritius and Henry, were, like him, the pillars and supporters of the Republic he had founded.

ON the demise of his grandson, William the second of the name, under whose Stadtholdership civil feuds rose higher than ever, that office was through a variety of intrigues unhappily abolished, and an absolute aristocracy established on its ruins. This was an event highly acceptable to the French, with whom that party formed immediately a strict coalition.

BUT the pernicious consequences of wanting a head soon appeared. Bereft of that vigilant inspection over their military affairs, which had peculiarly characterised the administration of the Stadtholders, the Republic was left open and defenceless to its enemies. France taking the opportunity of this helpless situation, invaded and almost reduced it to subjection.

NOTHING but a danger of such magnitude was able to open the eyes of the Dutch to the error they had committed, in suffering an ambitious faction of pretended patriots to deprive the State of so requisite an office as that of Stadtholder. It was forthwith restored; and the good consequences instantly appeared in the expulsion of the French, and the re-establishment of the affairs of the Commonwealth.

ON the decease of William, third Stadtholder of that name, whose valour and patriotism both England and Holland have equal reason to remember with gratitude, it was with avowed pleasure that France beheld a second abrogation of that office.

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It continued suspended until that alarming crisis during the war of Seventeen Hundred and Forty, which brought the armies of France to the very gates of Holland, if one may so express it; when the Dutch, incensed at the passiveness with which their rulers behaved in circumstances wherein the most active measures were needed, threw off all respect for so spiritless a Government, and in defiance of its authority elected a Stadtholder in the person of William the Fourth, father to the present.

THE utility of this high and important dignity was no less visible upon this occasion than it had been formerly. It calmed dissention at home, and by reuniting the strength and vigour of the State, rendered it much more respectable and secure.

THE French in particular felt the consequences of this measure in the resolution with which the Dutch proceeded to oppose the progress of their arms. It was not therefore without reason they endeavoured at that time to represent it in an odious light to the Dutch, and have ever since continued, by means of their emissaries, to describe it as inimical to the interests of that Republic.

WERE it only for the aversion which France has at all times expressed to this office, those people in Holland who entertain just ideas of the relation in which that monarchy stands towards them, ought seriously to use their most effectual endeavours to prevent its abolition. Whatever pretences may  
most be



be alledged by the partizans of France, no sensible person can look on this earnest desire of that Court to bring about an humiliation of the House of Orange, but as a proof how much it would redound to the detriment of the Commonwealth; of which, in the nature of things, and according to the commonest rules of long established policy, France cannot be reputed the real and unsuspected friend.

SUCH a spoliation of their authority was doubtless highly mortifying to what is stiled the Republican, but is no more in truth than an Aristocratic party, constantly watching for every opportunity of suppressing the function of Stadtholder, and filling every office in the State with their own adherents. In the true spirit of faction, it considers all its opponents as the enemies, and all its abettors as the friends, of the State. On this principle it has always profest a marked attachment to France, on account of its inveteracy to the House of Orange, and to the dignity of Stadtholder.

THE impartial part, the generality indeed of the Dutch, have always considered that dignity as the lawful claim of the Princes of the House of Orange. The opposition to it arises chiefly, if not solely, from the Patrician families, which extinguished it in the last, and were so solicitous at the commencement of the present Century, on the death of King William, to prevent his having a successor in the Stadtholdership.

THOSE excepted who entertain expectations  
from

from that party, few persons harbour any enmity either to that office, or to the family that has possessed it. The Commonalty, who in all countries are usually led by the plain perception of things, and are not easily governed by artifice, have generally testified a warm predilection for the House of Orange. It is founded in them, on the indisputable services rendered by it to the Commonwealth, and on the prosperity it always enjoyed under their government. This being a plain matter of fact, which no one can justly deny, it never fails to make a strong impression upon their minds, and to invalidate all the objections to that office by those who endeavour to depreciate it by far-fetched arguments.

BUT beside the Commonalty, there are numbers who look upon that office as essentially necessary to the welfare of the Republic. They ground their persuasion on the maxim which teaches, that those causes which give existence and prosperity to a State, will secure the continuance of both. As the Stadtholdership was therefore coeval with the commencement of the Republic, and accompanied it during its progress through all dangers and difficulties, until its final establishment; and as it has always been exercised with great lustre and benefit to the public by the Princes of the Family of Orange, they deem it an infraction of the fundamental principles of the State, to suffer that office to be suspended upon any occasion,

and for any reason, and alledge the many inconveniences that arose from its formal suppression after the death of William II. and its lying dormant after the demise of William III.

FACTS are incontestibly in their favour. The perils from which, as already observed, the restitution of that office to the Princes of Orange rescued the people of Holland, are strong proofs how justly those reasoned who took the resolution to declare themselves for its re-establishment, and how much they deserved of their country who ventured their persons in so patriotic and so necessary a measure.

ANTECEDENT to the revolution which forty years ago restored the father of the present Stadtholder to the honours of his family, many were the heart-burnings and discontents throughout the Seven United Provinces, on account of his long exclusion from them. The two Provinces of Friesland and Groningen, of whom he was already the Hereditary Stadtholder, thought it a mark of high disrespect to them to refuse the imitation of so just and laudable a measure. As he was the only remaining Prince of a House to which the Commonwealth had the highest obligations, it was not without much dissatisfaction, that its numerous friends beheld it neglected in a manner, which on some occasions appeared to be accompanied with disrespect.

In the mean time, many sensible and impartial individuals



individuals were not wanting to examine the political advantages that would accrue from a restoration of the office of Stadtholder. It was represented as an equipoise not a little needed in the government, and of manifest utility in breaking the violence of parties, and quieting the minds of the public, which naturally desired a moderator in all discussions and disputes relating to it.

THE general opinion of Europe was often quoted. This opinion was, that the Dutch did not act wisely in denying themselves a head and president over their affairs, in imitation of their ancestors. Tho' respect or dread of the ruling powers might contain the subjects of the Republic, those who felt themselves at freedom, vented their thoughts with great latitude of expression.

THEY contended, that no other motive saving that of factious adherence to the Aristocratic party, could prevent the Dutch from doing justice to the House of Orange, as well as to themselves, by raising it to the posts enjoyed by its ancestors; the interest of Holland was deeply concerned in supporting with due splendor, a family which had afforded so many valiant protectors to that country, and which had given such signal proofs of its talents for government, and of its attachment and fidelity to the cause of the public. The solicitude at all times expressed by the French Court to depress that family, and abolish the office so long annexed to it, was adduced as an unanswerable

proof of the importance and necessity of preserving both; the only motive for this marked and irradicable antipathy being certainly no other, than the consciousness how great a bar they both were to its ambitious designs, and with how much more effect Holland would oppose them, by having recourse to such a measure. The Dutch ought therefore to exert their zeal in the support of the House of Orange and the Stadtholdership, proportionably to the eagerness manifested by France for their discouragement and suppression; conformably to the maxim which enjoins all States to cherish and defend those persons most, against whom its enemies betray the strongest inveteracy.

THESE arguments, and many others of the like nature, were circulated with great warmth and industry by the friends of the House of Orange. They were loud and vehement on many occasions, and represented the dereliction of that illustrious family, and the neglect with which it was treated, as an instance of ingratitude highly disgraceful to the character of the Dutch, as it exposed them to the contempt of the unprejudiced part of Europe, which was not ignorant that this shameful behaviour proceeded from factiousness, and by no means from any sound principles of policy.

NOTWITHSTANDING the secret endeavours of the numerous adherents to the House of Orange, it continued in a state of humiliation from the

premature death of the grandfather to the present Stadtholder, who was unfortunately drowned in the prime of life, to the time of his son the late Prince's marriage with the Princess Royal of Great Britain, daughter to George II.

THIS event revived the hopes of that family, and was a severe blow to its enemies, who did all they could to prevent it; well foreseeing the lustre it must necessarily derive from so splendid a connection, and the additional vigour with which its friends would now exert themselves; to say nothing of the countenance and support it would in all likelihood receive from the Court and Councils of England, which would not tamely behold it treated with indignity.

FROM this period the Aristocratic faction began to entertain suspicions, that every effort would be made to reinstate the Prince in the posts enjoyed by his family. It became in consequence their chief study to obviate all opportunities that might tend to favour such a measure. To this determination may be principally ascribed the passiveness with which they remained tranquil spectators of the prodigious successes of France, in the war which broke out on the decease of the last King of Poland but one, of the Saxon line. So great, or, to speak with more propriety, so criminal was their indolence upon this occasion, that they suffered the whole of that large and excellent country, the Duchy of Lorrain, to fall into the hands  
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of France ; or rather indeed to be given up to it without trouble or cost, and without doing any more than merely asking for it.

SUCH a servile acquiescence in the views of France, was well known at the time to result merely from the dread of coming to a rupture with that Crown ; which might have afforded a just pretence to the friends of the original constitution of the Dutch Commonwealth, for insisting on a re-institution of the House of Orange. A demand of this kind would undoubtedly have been powerfully seconded by the Court of England ; which it would have been dangerous to disoblige by a refusal. It was equally well known that an exaltation of the Prince to the ancient dignities of his House was earnestly desired by the whole military list ; who would not, with much patience, have seen any other General at their head, while a Prince of Orange remained, of an age and condition to assume the command.

GREAT was the indignation excited by this flagitious conduct : not only the well-affected to that Prince in the United Provinces, but every unbiassed politician in Europe, condemned it in the severest terms, as base, spiritless, and selfish, equally derogatory to the honour and interest of Holland, and dictated by a factious and contemptible aversion to a family which claimed



ed the affection and respect of the Dutch nation by every tie of policy as well as of gratitude.

Thus it appears, that one of the most injurious events to the interest of the United States, was brought about by the traitorous conduct of its rulers, at a crisis when, by acting with integrity and prudence, they might have unquestionably prevented it. But as the performance of the duty they owed to their country must have probably been attended by the elevation of the House of Orange, the public good was sacrificed to their aversion for this family.

THE enlargement of France ensuing from this misconduct, produced, shortly after, the most fatal consequences to the peace of Europe. On the demise of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, the French Court, elated with so considerable an acquisition, which brought the dominions of that Crown so much further into Germany and the Low Countries, conceived the ungenerous and unworthy design of dispossessing the daughter of that Prince of her hereditary patrimonies. The issue of the ambitious projects of that Court are well known ; but they would never have taken place, and the late Empress-Queen would in all probability have succeeded quietly to her father's inheritance, had not the impolitic conduct of the ruling men in Holland furnished France with the means of disputing it, and of making all Germany a scene of blood and confusion.

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To what excesses of imprudence does not the spirit of faction conduct the wisest men ! Was it possible for such individuals as presided over the affairs of Holland, at the times and during the transactions above commemorated, to be ignorant of the terrible consequences to which they exposed their country, by the malversation of which they must have known themselves guilty ? Had they forgot the insulting behaviour of France, whenever she thought herself in a condition to domineer ? Or were the cruel invasions of their country by that haughty power effaced from their remembrance ? They could not be so little acquainted with the temper of that Court, as to imagine that its views and politics were changed. As often as opportunities arose of shewing its disposition, repeated experience taught them, that fair promises and polite expressions were but a screen to dangerous designs, and that no professions of good will and amity could be depended upon. The arrogance, the ambition, the duplicity of France at that very time, were manifest in all its proceedings. Seconded by the successful operations of its armies, the whole tendency of its negotiations was to circumvent, overawe, and encroach upon all its neighbours. A Ministry that acted so faithlessly in many glaring instances, would feel no more scruple in deceiving them than others, whenever it might conduce to the advancement of the schemes

schemes its restless disposition was perpetually projecting.

ONE would think, that the specious manners and affected civilities of the French had worn away from the minds of the Dutch those impressions which the barbarous treatment of their ancestors in the last Century had so justly made, and which ought to have remained much longer than they did, a powerful motive of hatred and resentment. They seem, however, to be utterly obliterated at the present day; especially among those classes that pretend to superior politeness and refinement. But among those who have not cast off the plain manners and unaffected notions of their forefathers, the behaviour of the French; when they were masters of Holland, is often a subject of serious consideration; and they seem not so ready to reconcile themselves to a persuasion, that France is the well-wisher of a nation which it could use with so much cruelty without any provocation, when fallen unhappily under its power; and at a time when the services that had been rendered to it by Holland were but recent, and ought therefore to have softened the rigour of hostilities; had the Dutch given occasion for any.

It is principally among people of this latter description that an opposition to France, and an adherence to the House of Orange and the Stadtholdership, most generally prevails. This nat-



rally reminds one that it is chiefly among persons of good sense in the middle classes, one finds, in all countries, the staunchest friends to the real welfare of the public. As they have seldom any private wishes to gratify inconsistent with the common interest; and as the mediocrity of their station precludes them from the expectations of benefiting by meddling with affairs of state, they leave them willingly to the management of their superiors, and content themselves with observing their conduct, and giving their opinion of it.

THE general wish of persons of this sort throughout the United Provinces, as already hinted, is highly and decidedly in favour of the House of Orange and the dignity of Stadtholder. As in matters of this kind they are unbiassed by personal hopes or fears, they judge without prejudice; and by consulting past events, which, in the present case, preponderate against all reasonings, however shrewd and well-arranged, they are easily convinced of the propriety of adhering to the old system, and of maintaining therefore the rights of the Prince of Orange to the Stadtholdership.

It is difficult, on the other hand, to assign any other reason for the opposition to that family and office, than the ambitious and haughty spirit that pervades the members of an Aristocracy, wherever it is settled either formally or virtually.

ally. The distinction indeed is seldom found but in words, in any Republic that is not recently established. In all others we find, with hardly any exception, that the supreme authority is constantly engrossed by a certain number of families, which are exceedingly careful to exclude all others from any participation—considering themselves as hereditary possessors of all the offices and emoluments of the State, and deeming it a kind of intrusion for any beside, to stand candidates for a place in the Regency, as it is denominated.

THESE families are not displeased with the stile of Patrician, which is usually given to them; and are very desirous of being placed on the footing of those senatorial houses among the ancient Romans, of which they bear the title. Whatever haughtiness is ascribed to the Nobility in Monarchies, it does not most certainly exceed that which is exercised by these Republican Grantees, if the tyrants of an Aristocracy may claim such an appellation.

YET do these gentlemen really imagine, that the bulk of the people will ever look upon them with the same confidence and respect as they have been used to do, for the greatest part of two Centuries, to a race of heroes, in whose places they never substituted themselves without great detriment to the public? Do they flatter themselves that in default of their own people, their  
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allies will place more dependence on them? Let them recollect the fate of the greatest man of their party, the celebrated De Wit. If courage, abilities, and integrity ever composed the character of any individual, he unquestionably possessed all three in an eminent degree. Yet he was not able to stand his ground. The genius of the people and of the government of the United Provinces was so clearly against the system by which he proposed to rule, that, notwithstanding his vast capacity, he could not bring it to bear; and was obliged, in order to give it a temporary stability, to depart from all the precedents already established, and to overturn, in a manner, the whole form of the Republic. But what was the consequence of these hazardous and harsh measures? Discontent and instability at home, and continual danger from abroad. As he had ruled in a perpetual storm, it rose to such a height as to be no longer governable; and he perished at last in the midst of it, leaving a dreadful lesson, how dangerous it is to attempt the alteration of a State which stands upon a just foundation, and the principles of which have taken deep root in the minds of the generality.

HOWEVER imperfect in many other respects, the constitution of the Dutch Republic was so immoveably founded on the Stadtholdership, that without this office it was no longer the same; in the like manner as England, after the  
abolition



abolition of Monarchy in the person of Charles the First, became immediately subject to another species of government.

It was not therefore surprizing that troubles and confusions should attend the subversion of both. Neither is it unworthy of very particular remark, that both these revolutions happened precisely at the same æra. The minds of men in England and Holland seemed intent on the trial of political experiments, and never rested till convinced by experience of the fallacy of the new, and compelled by necessity to recur to their old maxims of government—the first, by restoring the Crown to Charles the Second—the last, by re-establishing the Stadtholdership in the person of William, grandson to the illustrious founder of their Republic.

LET not the partizans of the Aristocracy promise themselves any other issue to the revolution which they are so zealously endeavouring to effect. Should it take place, anarchy and discord will infallibly ensue, to the great satisfaction of some who pretend much friendship to them; but who will not a little rejoice to see the ruin of a State, of which, according to their political system, they cannot view the real and solid stability and prosperity, without fearing an animated opposition from it to most of their measures.

SUCH being the case, as who can hesitate to believe, unless blinded by ignorance or the enthusiasm

thusiasm of party, is it not surprizing that in a clear-sighted people such multitudes should still waver for which of the two sides to declare themselves !

THAT many men of talents and uncommon merit should espouse the cause of the Aristocracy may well be expected, when we consider the great objects they propose to compass ; but that they should meet with so many abettors, must excite the wonder of those who reflect, how few of them comparatively can be benefited by a change of affairs, and how much the administration of these will suffer by being transferred into other hands.

WITHOUT meaning to under-rate the personal character of any man in Holland, one may presume that no individual in the present Opposition to the Prince of Orange can be placed on the level with a Barnevelt or a De Wit. Yet, without a capacity such as theirs, the Opposition, it is commonly thought, will hardly accomplish the ends for which it is formed. But were it to meet with all the success it aims at, will the most considerable of that party have the presumption to think himself adequate in personal importance and weight, either in domestic or foreign transactions, to that which was possessed by a Stadtholder ?

SHOULD storms arise from abroad, whom do the Dutch conceive the most able to stand in the front of danger ; a private individual commissioned  
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for that purpose by a faction well known to consist of a minority of the people ; or an hereditary Representative of the nation, invested with the splendour of the State, and possessing the confidence and veneration of an infinite majority ?

WHATEVER may be the desert of a subject, a princely descent and a long line of illustrious ancestors confer an air of grandeur which imposes on the most firm and solid minds ; much more on the multitude, which requires clear and unambiguous titles in those who claim its reverence ; and will for that reason sooner pay its homage to such as exhibit visible tokens of grandeur, than to those who have but their intrinsic merit to plead.

BUT when to exterior greatness internal worth is added, the influence they jointly exert is beyond compare above all that can be done by either of them separately. When we figure to ourselves such men as every one of the Stadtholders were, can we doubt an instant whether the Dutch would not have crowded to their banners, in the day of need, with incomparably more readiness and resolution, than to the standard of any other of the bravest and most conspicuous of their countrymen, a Barnevelt and a De Wit not excepted ?

SHOULD such alliances be formed as were once, and may again be necessary to stem the torrent of ambitious projects, would the armies of foreign Princes put themselves under the authority, and submit implicitly to the direction of a Dutch Commander in Chief, with the same alacrity as they



they would obey a Prince of Orange decorated with the dignity of Stadtholder ?

LET it at the same time be duly recorded, that whatever great things were done for the Republic, they were every one performed under the auspices of a Stadtholder. It was founded, strengthened, and perfected by the valour and wisdom of those who bore that title. The whole lives of William the First, Mauritius, and Henry, were a series of noble actions. The great confederacy, at the commencement of the present Century, that broke the power of France, was formed under the guidance of a Stadtholder, William the Third, who had the happiness of preserving the State of which his great-grandfather had been the founder.

LET it, on the contrary, be equally recorded, that the greatest misfortunes that befel, and perils that threatened the Dutch, happened when they were deprived of a Stadtholder. It was in the period between the decease of William the Second and the exaltation of William the Third, that Holland was involved in three ruinous wars with England, and in another with France, which was near terminating in its utter ruin.

THE convincing and irresistible proof that these calamities were entirely owing to the want of a Head to the Commonwealth, was, that the Dutch immediately recovered all they had lost on restoring the Stadtholdership to its proper owner. Tho' this measure was not adopted until they were on

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the brink of perdition, yet it proved so efficacious, that from that instant they retrieved their affairs, and extricated themselves from the severest trial they had ever encountered.

WITH so many proofs before them of the preference that is due to a government headed by a Stadtholder, when compared with the Aristocratic system, nothing surely but the spirit of factious selfishness, or the clandestine intrigues of a foreign Power, whose intention is to disunite and weaken them, can be assigned as the cause of the present treatment of the Prince of Orange, and of the terrible dissensions that now agitate the United Provinces, and which, if not soon terminated, may probably kindle the flames of another war throughout all Europe.

BUT, independent of the benefits resulting to the State in its foreign concerns, the office of Stadtholder is of no less utility in keeping that balance in the internal management of its affairs, which is indispensably necessary for the preservation of domestic tranquillity, by preventing those dangerous disputes that so usually happen, when a President of sufficient weight is wanting to moderate the violence to which popular assemblies are always liable in his absence.

IN no country is such an official character more needed than in Holland, where, from the multitude of individuals claiming an essential share in the administration, a preponderating power is ab-

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solutely required to preserve an equipoise, and to prevent deliberations from degenerating into animosities and quarrels.

THIS is obvious to any one that examines the constitution of the Republic with due attention; it is so complex and intricate, composed of so many parts, perfectly independent, tho' closely connected; and so frequently acting in contradiction to each other, tho' unable to effect any thing without the strictest unanimity; that without some conducting hand to lead them out of such perplexities, the Councils and politics of this State must necessarily be fluctuating and divided, and therefore occasion civil disquiet and debility.

THE first view of the Dutch constitution is fair and specious. We behold Seven Provinces intimately united for their defence and preservation against all foreign enemies. In the transactions with Kings and States they act conjointly, and no separate communication is allowed in any matter where the interest of the whole body is concerned. War, peace, treaties of alliance offensive or defensive, the sending or receiving of ambassadors, the levying or disbanding of armies, the equipping or disarming of fleets, together with the levying of money for these various purposes; all this, and whatever else may relate to the common service of the various Provinces, is done in their united name, and by their undivided authority.

HERE then we behold the essential outlines of one and the same sovereignty, residing in and exercised



exercised by the combined efficiency and consent of one people aggregated for that intent. But here the idea of sovereignty stops, and goes no further. A variety of other sovereignties present themselves to our view, firmly seated on their own separate basis, and resolutely denying all dependence on the former; which can only exist by their temporary permission, and is liable to be dissolved, interrupted, or rendered inefficient, by the refusal of any of them to co-operate with the rest.

SUCH a constitution involves of course a multitude of contrarieties, and is subject to numerous impediments in the machinery that moves the many wheels of the State. Such, however, is the real picture of that government which has so long prevailed in Holland. Tho' it may from the pressures of necessity, and in some respects thro' the natural disposition of the Dutch, have been accommodated to their exigencies, yet the most that can be said in its favour is, that they have been wise enough on most occasions to repress the evil consequences with which it is naturally pregnant; but the seeds remain still, and have often been productive of much mischief, and seem at the present to have arrived at a maturity of strength sufficient to effect the greatest calamities.

BUT how can it happen otherwise in a country peopled in a manner with sovereignties, each of them, however small and insignificant, as violent in the assertion of its independence, and of the

prerogatives annexed to it, and as jealous of the least interference in its particular designs, as any Crowned Head can be supposed in the maintaining of his rights and dignity?

THE Republic of Holland consists not only of Seven Provinces, forming so many separate Republics, but every Town of note in each of those Provinces is also a perfect Commonwealth in itself, and exercises all the rights of sovereignty within the limits of its particular district.

WITHOUT consulting separately every one of these petty Commonwealths, the States of each Province cannot legally, and dare not indeed come to any resolution concerning the affairs of that Province. The consent of these Towns must be previously obtained before the Province can give its own to the requisitions of its Deputies at the Assembly of the States-General of the Seven United Provinces. Whatever authority and splendour these may display in the eyes of strangers, they have, in fact, no power but what is immediately derived from the Provincial States; nor these any other than what they receive directly from the Towns that have elected them.

THUS, without the concurrence of every one of these Towns, nothing can be done either in the Provincial Assemblies, or those of all the Provinces at the Hague. The opposition of the smallest is an obstacle that cannot lawfully be surmounted, and frequently has taken much time and solicitation

tion to remove, in cases where the measures proposed were evidently concerted for the public good, and could be obstructed from no other motive than caprice or selfish obstinacy : nor can it be denied that positive and invincible denials have been often given to proposals, of which the propriety could not reasonably be contested.

AN inference visibly resulting from this exposition of facts, which cannot be called in question, is, that the sovereignty so often attributed to the States-General of the United Provinces, is an absolute nullity. This sovereignty clearly resides neither in them nor in the Provincial meetings : it belongs wholly and solely to the Towns, and is exercised by them in the most exclusive and arbitrary manner. They are in truth the only judges of public measures ; they are responsible to none but themselves ; and are the tribunal which decides in the last resort, and before which every affair of general consequence is amenable.

ANOTHER inference not less clear, and of no less importance, is, that the very worst ingredient in all political institutions is the fundamental rule in the Dutch system of government. This is the *Liberum Veto*, so unanimously reprobated by all sound politicians as the bane of all domestic peace and rational government, and the readiest instrument of faction, wherever the use of so fatal a prerogative is permitted, as every age and country where it has been allowed can testify.

To



To this unfortunate circumstance alone are the miseries that have so long afflicted Poland, and its late dismemberment, to be intirely attributed. To what extent the calamities of Holland may be carried by the establishment of this fatal maxim in its constitution, time alone will declare; but the power of putting a stop to all the operations of Government, by the sole dissent of one only of its component members, is an enormity in politics of which no wise legislator can approve; and of which no country ever admitted, without having soon or late ample cause for repentance.

POLITICIANS indeed are divided in their opinion concerning the propriety of deciding by a mere plurality of suffrages. Some have thought that a very small majority in a large number of votes, was a preposterous argument in favour of the utility of any measure, and that the sanction of a numerous majority could alone be reputed to represent the general opinion of men. In such cases, indeed, as do not require an expeditious decision, a regulation by which two-thirds or three-fourths of an assembly should coincide in opinion, might prove more salutary; but in all those instances where the public would suffer thro' delay, one ought for that reason to hasten to a conclusion with all the speed that is consistent with freedom of deliberation.

ANOTHER circumstance arising to view out of this chaos of perplexity that environs the constitution

tion of Holland, is the Aristocratical spirit that pervades it throughout. Who would not imagine, on being told that the ultimate decision of all matters was vested in the Towns of the several Provinces, that by this expression was meant a free convention of the citizens? Such an idea naturally offers itself, were it only in consequence of that respectable denomination of Republic, so pompously assumed by the Dutch. But what must be the surprize of a sensible impartial man, when he finds on further inspection, that instead of a general meeting of the respective inhabitants of these Cities, or of Delegates indiscriminately chosen by the suffrages of the inhabitants in their collective capacity, a small number only, consisting of certain families, have usurped an hereditary right of governing these Towns; and that their authority is through custom, prescription, and fear, so firmly rooted, that they alone have the absolute disposal of offices and places, and the management of public affairs, exclusively of all other individuals.

HERE then is an Aristocracy as real and complete as that of Venice itself; with this sole difference, that in this latter it is formal and avowed, and in Holland virtual, and concealed under denominations and pretences that hold out a less offensive idea to the public. But however cautious and modest in their words and demeanour, or even moderate in their use of the power they have

have thus arrogated, the members of the Aristocratic combination of individuals that rule over the Dutch, cannot disguise to the perception of any intelligent person, that they possess in fact an arbitrary sway over the remainder of the nation. True it is, that they usually exercise this sway with great prudence and moderation; but still it exists, and is sometimes exerted in a very unjustifiable and tyrannical manner.

THE sovereignty in these Dutch Towns consists of the Burgomasters and Senate. When vacancies happen, these alone enjoy the prerogative of filling them up, which they constantly do with their nearest relations. No man presumes to censure their proceedings on such occasions. The submission to their authority is indeed of so long standing, that it is become habitual, and is seldom complained of; though it must certainly be extremely irksome to men of education and spirit, who can discover no reason for suffering any of their fellow-citizens to monopolize honours and employments, and to domineer over them thro' hereditary prescription.

FROM the various incumbrances in the system of government adopted in this country, that impede the activity which is often indispensable in affairs of State, such dilemmas have sometimes arisen, that the ablest ministers have been under the necessity of departing from the fundamental maxims of the constitution, in order to accomplish



plish the objects they had in view. The most remarkable event in the History of the Seven United Provinces was brought about in contradiction to the settled rules of their government. The Treaty of Peace by which Spain offered to recognize the Independence of the Dutch, was so obstinately opposed by the Province of Zealand, that the other Six Provinces took the determination to set aside its vote upon this occasion, and actually concluded that Treaty without its consent! A century after this event, during the last war waged by France against the House of Austria, the States-General resolved to interfere in its assistance; but they could only obtain the concurrence of Four out of the Seven Provinces: these were Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Overijssel. The three remaining, which were Guelderland, Utrecht, and Groningen, continued immoveable in their dissent; but, convinced of the necessity of the measure, the States disregarded this opposition, and sent a large body of troops to succour the Queen of Hungary. Both these were bold and striking deviations from the essential maxims of the Dutch Government, and clearly shew, that in order to compass great and salutary ends, wise men are occasionally compelled to disregard them. This at the same time strongly proves how erroneous these maxims are, and how much they necessarily tend to detriment the State which is so imprudent as to adopt them.

UNANIMITY in the pursuit of public measures, is a phantom which can only find room in the conceptions of the weak and inexperienced. Wherever freedom of opinion is allowed, men will never be intirely of the same: nor is it reasonable to expect it, or even desirable that all people should agree without exception. It is only by opposing measures that their propriety can be justly elucidated; in which light, contradiction, while unattended with violence, and unproductive of any more than verbal warmth, is much more to be wished for than disapproved of in deliberative assemblies.

NOTHING therefore can be more absurd than the necessity which the Dutch have imposed upon themselves, of a perfect unanimity of opinion, in order to carry any public resolve into execution. Where so many voters are concerned, it is hardly conceivable that they will every one form the same judgment on the subject in question: the Provinces, or the Towns in them, will have frequently some private interests to consult, which may not strictly accord with those of others. Hence they will differ in their opinion of the measures propounded, and, by thwarting each other, will sometimes defeat the best concerted schemes.

THIS has more than once been the case in Holland. Notwithstanding the boasted sentiments of unanimity, which some uninformed panegyrists  
delight

delight in appropriating to the character of the Dutch, they have even, in conjunctures the most critical, fallen into violent contentions about the rectitude of measures to be pursued for the common utility. In the wars that took place under the administration of De Wit, especially the last against France and England, there was hardly a proposal made that was not combated by another with a heat and pertinacity that occasioned many distresses to the public. The Maritime Provinces contended for the necessity of a great naval force, and seemed to sacrifice all other objects to that consideration. The Inland Provinces, on the other hand, were no less strenuous for a formidable land army. The first alledged the indispensable need of protecting commerce, the soul and support of the Republic; the others insisted no less on the danger of leaving their frontiers exposed to the devastations of the enemy. Hence, thro' the fear of disobliging either of the contending parties, those who administered the affairs of the public, were at a loss how to reconcile interests that jarred so materially; and the disputes continued, to the great injury of the State.

NOTWITHSTANDING the examples that have been cited of the Dutch Ministry venturing to break through the fundamental laws of the Republic on some particular occasions, it would be a policy full of peril to repeat frequently such precedents; they have accordingly been very rare.



The jealousy of the various component members of the Republic would soon be excited, were they who govern to make a practice of such deviations. The resentment of the Aristocratic party at such infractions of the established laws, and encroachments on their peculiar privileges, might prove fatal to those who had dared to make them. For this reason, we must not expect that Statesmen will risk much for the real interest of their country, where they meet with such cogent motives to deter them: they will therefore not go out of the beaten track; and permit of course many favourable occasions of serving the public to escape them, sooner than by running counter to usages avowedly constitutional, and sanctioned by the obstinacy of long habit, bring themselves into danger, and, instead of receiving thanks, incur censure, if not punishment.

It is chiefly this unhappy determination, that unanimity shall accompany all public proceedings, to which we must ascribe the length and tediousness which is so justly complained of in all their political transactions. Some people have ignorantly imagined this tardiness was owing to the phlegmatic and circumspectful temper of the Dutch; while in fact it is caused by the disagreeable obligation which the ostensible rulers are under, of taking the advice of such a numerous body of counsellors; or, to speak more justly, of using such infinite pains to reconcile a multitude

tude of masters to the opinions laid before them for their assent, and to obtain their orders for the carrying them into execution.

It is highly difficult to use much expedition, where so many causes of retardment are continually arising. Often are the States taken up with deliberations, when they should have entered upon action; and as often are they beginning to act, when the measures they have resolved upon ought to be nearly brought to an issue.

As tardiness and delay are the greatest foes to all enterprizes, both private and public, it is a matter of surprize to many, that so judicious a people as the Dutch have not bethought themselves of some effectual expedient to prevent the constitutional tediousness, as it were, that deadens all their operations. But the truth is, there is but one method of removing the many impediments to unanimity and activity which have been mentioned, and of remedying the various defects in their government that have been described. This is the institution of the Stadtholdership; which by the open and secret, public and private influence it is able to exert in all cases wherein its power can operate, has seldom been found to want sufficient efficacy to connect or reunite the sentiments and interests of the different parts of the community, in such a manner as to obviate all dissensions of a serious nature.

As most of the internal contentions and foreign disputes that have been attended with great detriment

ment to the State, arose during the suspension of that office; such, for instance, as the wars with England, and the invasion of the Provinces by France, and the civil discords to which they gave rise; this ought to convince the Dutch of the imprudence of abolishing or of suspending it. The danger even of limiting the prerogatives annexed to it is not little, considering how much they are circumscribed. The subsistence of this office intire and unimpaired, seems on every consideration indispensibly requisite for the support and welfare of every portion of the Republic. Without the full exercise of all the authority and weight which constitutionally belong to it, nothing is clearer than that disagreement and jarring will enter into their consultations, and perplex the best concerted schemes of their wisest ministers.

WHATEVER degree of uprightness and patriotism may prevail over the majority; where ever the dissent of a few, or even of one member of the deliberative power, suffices to put the rest to a stand, how easy will it be to frustrate the intentions of that majority, and to breed a division among them! The disappointed expectation of some ambitious individual, the offended pride of some ruling family, are alone fruitful sources of such private animosities, as may quickly ripen into public feuds. Should, for instance, any of the Deputies that compose the Assembly of the States-General, take exception at the conduct of  
the



the others towards him, with how much facility might he aggravate it, and how readily may his constituents be brought over to concur in his resentment? Or, when matters, wherein foreign powers are concerned, come to be agitated, should such resolutions be apprehended as may prove disagreeable to them, how easy is it for the party thus interested to employ its agents in thwarting those resolutions? Holland is a country where the abilities of foreign ministers have an ample field for exercise. Much has been said of the unshaken probity of the Dutch Statesmen; but without insulting their general character, which is justly much respected, it were wonderful indeed if no instances of infidelity could happen among the numbers who are intrusted with public affairs. Should an artful minister meet with a repulse from one quarter, there are others where he may be more successful. If he fails among the Members of the States-General, he may apply to those of the Provincial Assemblies: If these prove unfavourable, he may attempt the ruling men in the different Towns. He may, in short, set so many hands to work by ways unseen, and by means that are not discoverable, that it would be repugnant to the reiterated experience and knowledge we have of mankind, to doubt that many of the discordancies which have happened in the Assemblies of the General or Provincial States in the United Provinces, owe their origin to intrigues of this nature.

PREJUDICE

PREJUDICE and partiality alone can hesitate about the efficacy of the Stadtholdership in obviating most, if not all, these inconveniences. By presiding personally in the different meetings where national affairs are discussed, the weight of his presence alone is often able to crush an undue opposition to salutary measures, before it has gained ground : it encourages those whose intentions are fair and honourable, and intimidates those who harbour evil designs. The respect which he commands lays a foundation for unanimity, by inclining people to grant him those requisitions he lays before them for the common service. Whatever privileges may be claimed by individuals in theory, they seldom are apt to bring them into practice, when disagreeable to others, unless a great and absolute necessity compels them. Thus we find that men, however fond of immunities that are peculiar to the body of which they are members, shew no unwillingness to suspend the enjoyment of them, in order to accommodate themselves to the general wish of the major part of the community. By the same rule, when persons of great rank and dignity signify their desires to an Assembly, over which they lawfully preside, they are usually listened to with deference, while these desires appear not evidently unreasonable; the natural inclination in most men to avoid variances, leading them to compliance.

HAPPY

HAPPY the nation where this inclination to oblige the directing Power is not carried to excess; but more unhappy still that people where a punctilious jealousy renders individuals unnecessarily distrustful of every man in power. Such a disposition, in the management of a few factious persons, is able to sour the temper of the whole community, and to keep the body politic in a ferment, which, if not cooled in time, breaks out into serious dissensions. It is certainly wiser, for this reason, to give way to the ruling Power, when its demands on the public interfere with none of its essential rights, and are manifestly founded on no inimical or pernicious principle. According to the same maxim, if the admission of such a preponderating power carries with it no evil consequence to those over whom it is to preside, it ought, in consideration of the manifold advantages resulting from it, to be received as a constitutional part of their government; especially when they have been taught by experience that its utility is continual and important, and the flaws to which, like all human devices, it maybe liable, are but accidental, and easily remedied or prevented.

SUCH were the sentiments that prevailed two centuries ago, at the period which gave birth to the Dutch Republic. The brave ancestors of the present inhabitants of Holland certainly knew what liberty consisted in as well as their descen-



dants; yet we do not find any outrageous zeal in them against the proper authority of a Chief Ruler or Director. Had Philip of Spain contented himself with the just rights of Royalty, he might unto his dying hour have remained their King, and transmitted the sceptre to his posterity; but he was a tyrant in principle, and it was his tyranny alone which they opposed. To sovereignty over them they shewed themselves at no time to be foes. They repeatedly tendered their allegiance to that Prince upon equitable terms; but his haughtiness would accept of nothing short of despotic sway. When disappointed in their applications to him, still they retained a due respect for monarchy. Influenced solely by this respect, they sought in the sincerity of their hearts for Kings to govern them. The world well knows the advantageous offers they made to the Courts of France and of England.

IN default of a Monarch, they wisely determined that an ostensible Head should preside over them, whose power, tho' not regal in every instance, should still resemble it in most.

FOR this reason, the States invested William, the founder of the Republic, with a degree of authority amounting almost to sovereignty; and of which he was to retain the possession so long as they should continue in war and under arms.

IN the instrument by which the States conferred this sovereign authority upon that Prince, it was de-

declared as a fundamental maxim of the government they were about to establish, " That all  
 " Republics and communities depending for their  
 " prosperity and preservation upon unanimity,  
 " which it was impossible to maintain in such a  
 " diversity of sentiments and inclinations as often  
 " prevailed in their assemblies ; it was therefore  
 " necessary that the government should be placed  
 " in the hands of one single Chief Magistrate."

THIS declaration was long considered by the Dutch as the indispensable rule of their conduct in all constitutional matters. They were so intimately convinced of the necessity of adhering to it in the most implicit and literal sense of its meaning, that on the barbarous assassination of William the First abovementioned, they conferred all his dignities upon his son Mauritius, a youth of no more than eighteen years. So strongly were they impressed with the propriety of what they had done upon this occasion, that they repeated the same precedent in the person of William the Second, son to Henry, the brother and successor of Mauritius in the Stadtholdership.

EXAMPLES of such a nature prove how much that dignity was believed to be inseparable from the constitution of Holland, and that notwithstanding the disputes that had unfortunately happened between Mauritius and Barnevelt, the Dutch were invincibly attached to the office of Stadtholder, and considered the differences be-

tween these two great men as personal, and, tho' prejudicial to the Republic through their ill consequences, yet as no ways affecting the principles of its constitution.

THE dispute between William the Second and the party that opposed the measures he had in view, was considered in no other light; till his untimely end, in the flower of his days, gave his enemies an opportunity of wreaking their vengeance on his family, by depriving it of the honours that had been hereditarily annexed to it.

IN order, at the same time, to invest themselves with its spoils, they abolished all those honours, retaining however the authority that accompanied them, and exercising it in a more arbitrary manner than had ever been known in the Stadtholders themselves. The great De Wit, however illustrious and respectable a character, did, among other stretches of authority, suppress in a manner the Council of State, by taking upon himself the entire management of the affairs which fell under its direction. This was assuming a power which the Stadtholders, in the plenitude of their greatness, had not exercised. It excited, of course, much discontent, and exposed him to the more indignation, as he had been the chief suppressor of the Stadtholdership, on pretence of its being an office that gave too much power to its possessor, and subjected every other office in the State to his exclusive controul.

NEVER



NEVER indeed had the Dutch a more effectual proof that the suppression of the Stadtholdership was only transferring its authority into other hands, which, by enjoying at the same time the official influence of every other employment, concentrated into one branch of government what had been partitioned between two, and consequently became more absolute, from this addition of power.

It was totally to the conviction of the unbounded authority accruing to them through such means, that De Wit and his brother, supported by the partizans of the Aristocracy, of which they were the heads, grew at length so confident and presumptuous, and engrossed the ruling of the State in so arbitrary and haughty a manner, as to offend all parties. It became at last the universal complaint, that they demeaned themselves more like masters than citizens; and that if the Republic must have a Supreme Head, there was a Family which had a better right to such a place than that of De Wit.

THE popular wish at that time for the restoration of the Prince of Orange to the dignities of his House, was not founded upon any weak attachment, proceeding merely from affection; it was enforced by other more substantial considerations.

NOTWITHSTANDING the splendour which has always accompanied the name of De Wit, there  
were

were flaws in his administration wholly inexcusable; and which did the more prejudice to his character, as they were caused by his personal ambition, and the ill-judged and unjustifiable determination to oppress the House of Orange.

THESE flaws were of the most serious magnitude. In order to annihilate, as he thought, for ever all the hopes of that Family and of its Friends, ever to recover from the depression to which he had reduced them, he gradually, and as imperceptibly as such a thing could be effected, new-modelled the army, dismissing the many veteran Officers who had served the State with equal fidelity and success, and filling up their places with inexperienced young men, the sons and relations of those who were of the Aristocratic party. What rendered this conduct highly criminal, was the danger the Republic was in from various quarters at that very time. To say nothing of the hostile temper of several of its German neighbours, England and France were entered into a confederacy against the Dutch; and were making such preparations, as sufficiently indicated against whom they were intended. De Wit could not plead ignorance of all this, yet he was so basely wedded to the faction by which he governed, that he obstinately persisted in the neglect of those means that naturally offered themselves to put his country into a proper state of defence. He neither recalled those Officers  
whom

whom he had so imprudently discharged, nor placed in military trusts such as were able to execute them. Instead of this, he remained, as it were, a passive spectator of the storm that was gathering over the State which had the misfortune to be under his direction. To say that he betrayed it, might be thought too harsh; and yet how can we describe otherwise the conduct of a man who knowingly and wilfully refused to alter a conduct which evidently tended to the destruction of his country?

THE generality of the Dutch looked upon him very justly as the cause of the dreadful calamities which were brought upon them by their French invaders. Even the least prejudiced against him could not justify his measures. One of the most upright and noble characters among his contemporaries clearly and positively condemns them. This is the great Sir William Temple, who, with his usual impartiality, acknowledges, that when Louis the Fourteenth invaded the Seven United Provinces, he found "their Towns without order, their Burghers without obedience, their Soldiers without discipline, and all without life."

So rooted was this antipathy of the De Wits and their faction to the House of Orange, that, according to the great authority just cited, "they would perhaps," to use his own words, "have not been displeased that some ill successes should have attended the Prince of Orange at his first



“ entrance upon the command of the army, as it  
 “ might have contributed to their design of re-  
 “ straining his power.”

At a time when the fury of the Aristocratic party in Holland seems intent on the demolition of the House of Orange, it is proper to represent in the strongest light the consequences of the enmity exerted against that House by some of the most celebrated of that party at a former period ; that by the effects it then produced, they may take warning in due time, and not suffer a similar spirit of outrageousness to bring upon them the misfortunes which their ancestors sustained thro' the violence and infatuation of an ambitious and arbitrary set of Rulers.

In the midst of the hatred borne to the House of Orange at the period we are describing, nothing could have been more deserving of attention, with the cool and impartial, than the little influence it had over the commonalty. Among this part of the community the attachment to that Family continued in full force, and rather encreased than diminished, through the endeavours of its enemies to oppress it. This attachment, as usual in such cases, proved at last too powerful to be resisted ; and, happily for the Republic, constrained those enemies to give way to the general wishes for its reinstatement.

We read in the Roman History, that so great was the aversion in which one of their Generals

was

was held by the army which he commanded, that neither officers nor soldiers could be brought to do their duty, and that they suffered themselves to be beaten out of hatred to him. They continued in this mood till they had obtained his removal; after which they behaved with their usual bravery, and vanquished the enemy by whom they had before been defeated.

THIS was precisely the case of the Dutch at the epocha when their country was invaded by France: until the Prince of Orange was called to the command of their armies, they fled every where before the French. Handfuls of these were sufficient to take towns and fortresses, to penetrate into the heart of the country, and to strike terror and dismay throughout the whole Seven Provinces. But the moment he appeared at their head every thing was reversed; the troops recovered their spirit, and the people their confidence; the enemy was repulsed every where, and whatever had been lost was regained.

THE events of this particular æra have been the more circumstantially dwelt upon in this place, because it is usual in Holland with the abettors of the Aristocracy to mention the name of De Wit with singular applause. It was deemed on this account peculiarly requisite to shew the erroneousness, what some indeed will stile the criminality of his conduct on so critical an occasion as that which has been represented. If so great a Poli-

tician was not able to manage the affairs of his country conformably to the plan he proposed, with what face will his inferiors in abilities venture to tread in his footsteps? If, notwithstanding the general patriotism of his character, he was guilty of breach of trust to his country, from motives of party, what right have the Dutch to expect any other treatment from those who have embraced the cause of that faction, which he vainly endeavoured to support by such unworthy means, and of which he fell at last the victim?

VEHEMENT is the cry of the Aristocracy in Holland, that a Stadtholder is not a proper office in time of peace, and at best should be resorted to only in war; that, like a Roman Dictator, his continuance ought to be short, and never to exceed the period of excessive danger.

THE answer to this objection, which is made a strong handle of by the adversaries to the Stadtholder, is ready and decisive. A Roman Dictator was absolute in every respect: he decided without appeal; his commands were instantly obeyed; life and death were constantly in his hands; and he disposed of all things according to his bare will, and without meeting with the least hesitation or controul.

BUT will any man say that this description agrees in any point with that of the Stadtholder? Were one to make a comparison of this dignity with any other, it ought to be with the power  
for-



formerly enjoyed by the Kings of Denmark or of Sweden, previous to the revolutions that have rendered both these Monarchs absolute. A comparison would indeed hold good, in a variety of instances, with the power exercised by a King of Poland. Others have thought it more proper to compare the Stadtholder to the King of England, and imagine that a near resemblance exists between them.

WITHOUT entering into a formal disquisition upon this subject, suffice it to observe, that the limitations to the authority of the Stadtholder are so many, that though he is justly reputed the Head of the State, it is much more by the influence he possesses in virtue of the exalted rank he holds, and of the respect which it commands; and also by the veneration of the public for his family, and the services done by his ancestors; than by any direct and positive sway arising from the office with which he is invested.

So circumscribed indeed is his authority, that it cannot in strictness be viewed in any other light than that of a delegation from the States-General. To them he is accountable in a multitude of instances, that clearly manifest their supremacy and his dependence. In the civil branches of Government his interference is very limited. The only prerogative he possesses which may be deemed truly of a royal nature, is that of pardoning criminals.

But he cannot confer a Magistracy upon any that are not presented to him for that purpose by the Towns wherein they are to officiate; nor can he expel any Magistrate without the consent of the States of the Province to which he belongs.

THESE particulars, to mention no others, prove at once, that the influence he obtains through affection or respect, is greater than that which he derives from mere authority.

NEITHER does his military power extend so far as to subject the army to his sole command. All General Officers are appointed by the States; and in the distribution of inferior stations, he would be very unwise to prefer any persons of his own chusing to those who are recommended to his notice by the people in power in the Provinces and Towns.

THE above restrictions, and a variety of others, too many to enumerate, amply refute the comparison of the Stadtholdership to the office of Dictator among the ancient Romans. But without having recourse to those restrictions, the making of peace and war, and the levying of taxes without the interference of the Stadtholder, are sufficient proofs how much his authority is limited.

NUMEROUS are those among the Dutch themselves, who are of opinion, that his powers ought to be augmented. Were he, for instance,

to be allowed a negative on the resolutions of the States, it would, in the persuasion of many impartial Politicians, contribute powerfully to prevent, or at least to frustrate the effects of foreign influence over their deliberations.

In the mean time, notwithstanding the circumscription of his powers, a Stadtholder fills a place of so much dignity, that, like a Monarch, he may justly be accounted the first Citizen of the State, of which he represents the greatness. Like him, therefore, he is more deeply interested in its welfare, and feels more warmly for its honour, than any other individual can be supposed, however wealthy in his circumstances, or dignified in his station.

CONFORMABLY to this, the patriotism of the Stadtholders has always been conspicuous. The noble sentiments of the first William shone forth in all his actions. So ardent was his zeal for the cause he had espoused, that he expended his whole income in supporting it. Twice did that brave and generous champion of his country levy and bring a considerable army to its assistance, at his own expence. His purse was ever open to its necessities; and no man ever went unsatisfied from his presence; so earnest he was to relieve every person who deserved well of the public, to the utmost of his abilities.

His son Mauritius was indefatigable in his activity. He was perpetually projecting plans to  
distress



distress the enemies of Holland, and to raise the character of his countrymen to the highest pitch of military fame. He succeeded to the utmost of his wishes. The Dutch, in his time, acquired a reputation for bravery equal to that of any nation.

His brother and successor, Henry, carried the importance of the Seven United Provinces to the highest degree to which it ever attained: and what was no less conducive to his honour, as it proved his talents for government, he conciliated the affection of all parties, and maintained a profound and uninterrupted tranquillity at home.

NOTWITHSTANDING the unhappy disputes in which his son William the Second was embroiled, his enemies allowed him many noble qualities. Had he not been carried off at so early a period, it was not doubted he would have filled the place of his predecessors with equal success and glory.

THE character of William the Third, his son, is so well known, that it needs no panegyric. Whatever personal blemishes malice has thought proper to invent or exaggerate, the public voice of Europe has long placed him among the greatest Princes. His unfeigned disinterestedness, at a time when he could have profited by the distresses of his country, in accepting the advantageous offers of its enemies—his resolution to stand his ground, or perish with his countrymen—the prodigious exertions resulting from his

his valour and his conduct—his unconquerable courage in the midst of every difficulty—the deliverance of the State, when reduced to the last extremity—the expulsion of an enemy, whose numbers and skill were deemed invincible—the power of the most formidable Potentate not only resisted, but impaired, and reduced to act on the defensive—his schemes defeated, and the interests of Europe protected from his sinister designs ;—all this effected against the hopes of the generality, and often against probability, and with much inferior, and always ill-compacted force, must be acknowledged to display abilities and spirit of the highest order, and amply authorize one to mention the name of this great Prince with the most illustrious recorded in History.

HAD the plans projected by William the Third for the benefit of the Republic, met with the acceptance which was due to them, Spain would not have fallen into the hands of France, and the calamities occasioned by an event so prejudicial to the general good of Europe, would never have happened. But the relicks of that party which had opposed his family with so much obstinacy, found means to tie up his hands, when he was on the point of forming such an union of strength among the European Powers as would effectually have obviated the necessity of having recourse to that less-powerful confederacy which was also due to his efforts, and which, at  
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such an expence of blood and treasure, arrested, though with infinite difficulty, the progress of the common enemy to the peace of Christendom. Whoever impartially reviews the transactions that took place between the Treaty of Nimeguen and the general war in Sixteen Hundred and Eighty-Nine, will readily subscribe to the truth of what is here asserted. But while he gives due credit to the sagacity of William's intended measures, he must, at the same time, bitterly lament the short-sightedness, as well as the iniquitous motives of those among his countrymen, who thwarted his intentions with so much violence, and thereby involved the Republic in the many fatal consequences that flowed from their opposition.

NOR should we forget how unavailingly that penetrating Prince endeavoured to keep together the ill-connected parts of the alliance he had been at such pains to procure for the prosecution of the war just mentioned. Had it, according to the wise counsels of that judicious Prince, been protracted but a little longer, the soundest Politicians foresaw the salutary effects it would have produced. The objects of the antecedent plans he had so frequently proposed, would at last have, in all likelihood, been accomplished by this. The Spaniards continuing in arms against the French, would have retained their ancient inveteracy to that Monarchy, and no Prince of  
that



that nation would have been called to the succession of the Spanish Throne.

OTHER instances of the rectitude of the political views of William the Third might be cited : but these are sufficient to shew how truly he merited the appellation of a Patriot ; and that, had he not been prevented by a factious set of men, well known to have been prompted to oppose him by the intrigues of an ambitious and artful Court, he would have rendered as many essential services to the general cause of Europe, at the close, as he had done at the beginning of his entrance into public life.

THE memory of the last Stadtholder, William the Fourth, deserves certainly the most honourable commemoration. He was a Prince every way worthy of the station to which he was raised by the unanimous voice of the disinterested part of the Dutch, as well as by a concurrence of circumstances favourable to his family.

PREVIOUS to this event, it cannot be denied that the discontents of the public on account of his exclusion from the dignities possessed by the House of Orange, were loud and frequent ; and threatened, in the apprehension of most men, to terminate in some fatal catastrophe, unless the desires of its well-wishers were speedily fulfilled.

WERE the quieting of the minds of the multitude only to have been consulted, that measure was justifiable on this account. When the bulk

of a people express their wishes for a Chief, it is certainly dangerous to oppose them. Experience is not always on the side of the popular maxim, That the voice of the people is the voice of God : but the same experience teaches very forcibly, that the manifest desire of a Nation is seldom to be combated with impunity.

THE Aristocracy, and those French writers who abet it, have warmly denied the necessity of recurring to the election of a Stadtholder, when it last took place. But a recapitulation of the various motives and causes which produced that event, will amply justify it.

THE establishment of domestic peace, at the time when the late Stadtholder was raised to that dignity, was a circumstance highly needed, when the situation of affairs then is duly recollected. It was a crisis pregnant with the most imminent danger to the Republic. To say that it was little interested in the war then waging by France, would be nugatory in the extreme, when we consider that war was raging, not at their doors, but in their very territories ; and that the French boastingly threatened to make Holland next year the seat of hostilities, and to establish their head-quarters at the Hague, at the opening of the ensuing campaign.

THESE threats were considered by the Dutch in a very serious light at the time they were made. The ill-success which had attended the arms of the allies in Flanders, had thrown that country into the

the possession of France. Louis, the Fifteenth, was then in a situation far preferable to that of his predecessor, Louis the Fourteenth, when he invaded the Seven Provinces. At that era the Spaniards stood between France and Holland, and were masters of all the interjacent countries. But these were now subjected to the French; and not a single barrier remained to oppose them that was not situated upon Dutch ground.

As to the pretence that France had no direct quarrel with them, and would not, therefore, have pushed its enterprizes any further, it is unworthy of men of sense to alledge such a frivolous reasoning against the measure it is meant to invalidate. What pretence had Louis the Fourteenth for attacking Holland with so much inveteracy? The Dutch had not certainly drawn the sword against that Monarch, and had at most endeavoured to put themselves in a posture of defence. But Louis the Fifteenth had far other causes to assign for carrying his arms into their country. They had actually committed hostilities, and their troops had met his armies in more than one battle. Upon what ground could they imagine that a French Ministry, flushed with success, would have stooped in the midst of its victorious career to a moderation so little consistent with the character of haughtiness and ambition it has borne so long? To have refrained from chastising the Dutch, as the French expressed



themselves at the time, would have been an instance of self-denial, of which very few precedents are met with in the records of France, whenever the chances of war have laid her enemies at her feet.

It was, therefore, a just and necessary measure for the Dutch to have recourse to a Stadtholder in the critical circumstances they found themselves. The event fully shewed it. All orders and degrees of men recovered from the consternation into which they had been thrown by the approach of the French armies. That terror which the Dutch had felt so deeply and so confessedly, was converted into a firm determination to face the enemy without shrinking from his superiority of numbers. Every preparation was made accordingly, and this change of disposition was universally attributed to the election of a Stadtholder, and to the confidence it inspired throughout every part of the Commonwealth.

When such glaring and instantaneous effects result from the adoption of any measure, and when they are at the same time of so salutary a nature, that measure becomes evidently such a fund of public benefit, so powerful a resource against all calamities, that it cannot be resorted to with too much eagerness, not only as a remedy, but as a preventive to all the evils, which it is found to speedily and so efficaciously to remove.

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THE unanimity and spirit of which it was productive in Holland, upon this occasion, gave an effectual check to the ardour of the French, and inclined them to listen to terms of moderation much more readily than they would have done, had those disorders and alarms continued, which had risen so high in consequence of their proximity. Never indeed had the Republic, since the days of Louis the Fourteenth, been menaced with so much danger from abroad, and experienced more unhappiness at home, from its unsettled situation, the parties that divided it, and the suspicions entertained by many, that the Rulers of the State were not sufficiently hearty in its cause, and were too much biassed by their antipathy to a Stadtholder, to enter upon such decisive and vigorous measures as might render it requisite to revive that office.

Thus we see, without recurring to far-fetched arguments, and by attending solely to plain matters of fact, in the knowledge of all, and in the remembrance of many, the indisputable propriety, or rather necessity, of maintaining the dignity of a Stadtholder in the United Provinces; that their prosperity and independence depend upon its remaining an inseparable part of the Dutch constitution; that whenever this office, through foreign machinations or domestic faction, has been suppressed or suspended, discord and internal feuds have been the immediate consequence, and

produced

produced external dangers ; that whatever inconveniencies it may, at times, have been attended with, still they were, upon experience, found to be much less than those that resulted from its absence. While it subsisted, these inconveniencies amounted, at most, to temporary disputes between individuals ; which, however violent, were always terminated without foreign intervention. But the cessation of this office always opened a door to universal discontent among the people at large, and affected the safety of the State, by dividing and weakening all its parts, and inviting ambitious neighbours to avail themselves of the disordered situation of affairs, to form and carry into execution hostile designs against its very independence.

THE Dutch are too sensible a people to dislike the office of Stadtholder, merely from the resemblance it may bear to that of a King. It is well known, that they formed themselves into a Republic from no other motive, than because those Princes whom they would have chosen for their Sovereigns, did not incline to hazard a quarrel with Spain, at that time a Power of such magnitude as to keep all Europe in awe. They ought, therefore, to feel no repugnance to an office, which accords so well with the Republican ideas, of which many of them are so tenacious, as by no means to invest the incumbent with any power that is not, in the strictest sense, dependent



pendent on the State. They, on the other hand, who view an admixture of Royalty as a very useful ingredient in all Governments, ought, from that motive, to exert themselves in favour of a dignity, which, though it confers not the title of Sovereign, bestows upon the possessor a variety of rights and prerogatives, which place him effectually at the helm of the State; and by the splendour and influence with which it is accompanied, enable him to eclipse all individuals, and to preclude all attempts to rival his rank or his authority. Thus he contains the most powerful and conspicuous within those bounds of moderation and modesty in their endeavours to rise and become important, that constitute what is so justly denominated the Balance of Power among the component parts of a State.

If by the admission of a Stadtholder so important an end is obtained, how studiously ought the Dutch to cherish and preserve such an office among them? If, by its abolition, that balance, so necessary to the internal tranquility of a State, is immediately overfet; in what light are we to consider those who are now striving, with so much pertinacity, to annihilate the powers of a Stadtholder, and to reduce their country to that situation of discontent and discord, from which dear-bought experience has repeatedly taught them that office alone can extricate and preserve it?

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HAVE they not before their eyes a constant remembrancer of the indispensable necessity of such an institution, to support a due equipoise between the different degrees of the community? Let them cast a look on the opposite shore. What, in the midst of the divers broils that of late agitated England, kept it from breaking out into those active violences that now render the Seven Provinces a scene of such confusion? The weight of the diadem alone was able to crush that spirit of outrageousness, which had taken possession of so many parts of the land. As the rod of Moses, extended over the sea, restored the troubled waters to their proper places, thus, if such a comparison may be permitted, the scepter of Majesty laid the waves of sedition, and enforced peace throughout the kingdom, in spite of every endeavour to disturb it.

BUT that happy exercise of power which emanates from the British Throne to pacify disturbances, and keep all ranks of people in due subjection to the laws, is unknown to the Constitution which the enemies to the Stadtholdership would now introduce. Their aim is manifestly to take into their own hands the exercise of that power; forgetting how little they can retain of it on those trying occasions, when a State is convulsed with commotions that shake it to its very foundation, and how small the strength of those men is then found who compose but a faction; nothing but  
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the whole strength of a State being adequate to the pacification of its internal troubles, and the efforts of parties to that purpose, serving only to increase the confusion which they strive to allay.

WHAT are in the mean time those commotions; to which a part of the Dutch nation is endeavouring to put an end by the expulsion of the Stadtholder? To an Englishman who views them with an impartial eye, and who unprejudiced for the separate interest of Patrician and Plebeian families, examines the united interests of both, these commotions appear in their due light of a struggle between these two parts of the community; one of them contending for a monopoly, the other for an equal repartition of power.

WHILE the Stadtholder stands his ground, the Commonalty will never want a protector from the excesses of authority, so usual in the Members of an Aristocracy. A Stadtholder is bound for his own sake to act with impartiality between these two contending parties. It is chiefly on this impartial behaviour he is to rely for that popularity, which must necessarily prove his main support, in a State where the power is lodged in a few hands. It was to acquire this popularity, that William, the founder of the Republic, called in so many new members to the Assembly of the States of Holland, increasing the number of Towns that had a right of deputation, from six to eighteen. Had not that great man made use of this equally wise



and just policy, the Aristocracy, of which he sought with so much reason to limit the power, would have been centered in so narrow a compass, as to have degenerated into an absolute tyranny. To him therefore are the Dutch indebted for the diminution of that excessive authority, to which, otherwise, they must have been subjected. He moderated the severity of a Government, which in all likelihood must have proved intolerable, had he not judiciously contrived to divide it among many more hands than it originally stood.

BUT this reformation, though highly acceptable to, and needed by all parties, at that critical æra, did not complete that system of equality which ought to be the basis of all free States; and without which, whatever denomination they may think proper to assume, they cannot rightly be said to enjoy freedom.

TRUE it is that titles are little known, and that if we consult only the appearances of things, there are no striking and ostensible marks of distinction, among the inhabitants of the Seven United Provinces. But notwithstanding the endeavours to conceal the appropriation of Supreme Power to a few, though almost unperceived in many instances, by those who are not at the pains of prying acutely into subjects of such a nature, yet this Aristocratic system flourishes in full force, and is felt by all who are capable of feeling.

THE contrast between the English and the  
Dutch

Dutch in this respect is truly singular and remarkable. In England, the highest and most consequential honours are conferred by the Sovereign upon his subjects. These honours are not only personal, but hereditary: they lift men to a prodigious height above other subjects: they are attended with such privileges and prerogatives, as rank their possessors in a peculiar class of society, far removed by their splendour and importance from all others. But so upright and impartial is the spirit of the English constitution, that in the midst of this elevation, it allows them no more than a repartition of power. Their share is measured out to them with so much exactness and precision, that it is not possible for them to transgress its bounds, without exposing themselves to immediate detection, and incurring the censure and indignation of the rest of the community.

BUT in Holland no branch of the community is hardy enough to avow its disapprobation of the authority usurped by the ruling, or rather the Reigning Families, as they have not improperly been denominated. Before the restitution of the Stadtholdership to the Prince of Orange, the terror in which all people stood of those families, was not less than that which is felt at Venice, or Genoa, for the Nobles; and it is only since that event, the inferior sort, and even many respectable individuals, have begun to recover from that slavish awe.

It is not therefore any matter of surprize; these Patrician families should be desirous of regaining that exclusive influence, which rendered them so powerful, and subjected the State to their intire and unmixed controul. The only road to their former greatness, is the over-throwing the authority of the Stadtholder, which stands in the way of the Aristocracy, and keeps these ambitious families on such a level with the remainder of their fellow-citizens, as is highly offensive to individuals long used to consider themselves as the hereditary rulers of the State.

EVER since the restoration of the House of Orange to its former honours, their vigilance has been constantly employed in the examination of the Stadtholder's conduct, and in endeavours to render it odious to the public.

Twice has Europe been involved in a general war since that epocha. The nonage of the present Stadtholder during the first, and the excellent character of his father, left them no pretexts to work upon; but the Princess his widow experienced much obloquy and malevolence on account of the affection she bore to the English nation, and the discountenance she shewed to those, who profest themselves by their conduct the well-wishers to France. The indecent satisfaction expressed by the enemies of the House of Orange, on the demise of that Princess, is in every one's memory, as well as the hopes they conceived of profiting



sitting by the youth and inexperience of her son,

THE triumphant war then carried on by England, was in the mean time such an eye-sore to that party, that they could not behold it with patience, and strove by every indirect means to aid and support the enemies of this country. But our good fortune frustrated all the efforts of malice; and it was not until our unhappy quarrel with America, that a door was opened to that revenge which had so long been meditated against England.

As soon as France had taken that decided part against us, which had been so long foreseen and predicted, it then became of course the policy of the foes to the Stadtholdership, to insist upon such measures being adopted against England, as would throw Holland intirely into the arms of France, and thereby enable the partisans of the Aristocracy to revive their system under the protection and influence of that Crown.

In order to effect this intent, all the complaints were renewed against the conduct of England, which had filled the mouths of its enemies during the preceding war. Trite and obsolete arguments were alledged against the domineering spirit of the English, and in behalf of the necessity of reducing their power at sea. Clamours of this kind were the engine, by means of which the enemies to the Stadtholdership excited the Dutch nation to favour the cause of France, and to renounce that  
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ancient friendship with England, which is founded on so many good reasons, and which, experience teaches, cannot be broken but to the mutual detriment of both countries, of Holland especially.

By breaking the connexion with England, and forming one with France, the Aristocracy fully saw the immense advantages accruing to that party. What France had formerly been, it would readily be again. Its interest naturally led it to oppose the grandeur of a family, from which it had nothing to expect but a steadfast adherence to the interests of Holland, which are at all times incompatible with the views of France. This adherence was prompted by the strongest of all motives, the consciousness that the aim of French politics was to destroy the office he bore, in order to rule by means of the faction which was to supplant it, and which must derive its principal support from France.

THIS developement of the system pursued by the partisans of the Aristocracy, has certainly nothing in it forced or far-fetched. It shews at the same time, that a Stadtholder must necessarily, from the very nature of his situation, and were it only for his own sake, embrace the real interest of his country. This interest, as that indeed of all countries, consists in a clear independence of all foreign influence, and a perfect exercise of its own sovereignty, unincumbered by the dictates or directions of any other potentate.

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BUT while any party in a State depends upon the assistance or countenance of a foreign power, the stronger that party grows, the weaker of necessity becomes the State itself, from the obligation that party is under to gratify the wishes of its supporter, and to render all its strength subservient to that end.

THUS it is evident, that as long as the Dutch Aristocracy is beholden to France for its aid, it must necessarily submit to be governed by the councils of that monarchy. It must therefore espouse its interests in preference to all others, however repugnant this conduct must often prove to the welfare of Holland itself. True it is, that from motives of policy, France may endeavour to render this subjection advantageous in some degree to those who suffer it; but the advantage will always be subordinate to her own conveniency and designs, and will be sacrificed to these the moment it is found to interfere with them. Hence all advantages of this kind are momentary and precarious in the extreme; to say nothing of the ignominy of holding them by such a tenure.

LET not the Dutch expect in that union of interests, which, the emissaries of France so warmly pretend, is now forming between the Seven United Provinces and that Monarchy, to find in the end any other purposes answered, than those which the French Ministry have constantly had in view, in all their connections with the Republic; these  
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are to make it subservient to their projects, and to treat it as the Romans did their auxiliaries and allies, on whom it bestowed that appellation, merely to elude the dependence in which they held them.

From that instant the troubles excited by the tyranny of the Spanish Government, began to render the inhabitants of the Low Countries desirous of throwing off the yoke, France affectedly put on the appearance of a protector; but took effectual care at the same time, to accompany this air of protection with demands and requisitions that made it of little value, and rendered it in fact of more utility to her, than to those on whom she pretended to bestow it.

An impartial review of the assistance which France has so often and so loudly boasted that Holland received from her at different periods in the day of need, will readily confute the assertions so strong in the speeches and writings of the French, that the Dutch Republic owes its existence to them.

When the States of the Netherlands, impatient of the cruelty and oppressions exercised over them, had taken the resolution to unite in a formal opposition to Spain; France, instead of affording them the help of which they stood so much in need, acted with a duplicity that disconcerted all the hopes they had formed from that quarter. Under pretence of preparing a powerful succour

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for them, Charles, the ninth of that name, then King of France, permitted levies of men to be made for their service, and promised to attack the Spaniards in Flanders on the side of France, while the Confederates attacked them on the other. But his real intent by this specious appearance of friendship, was merely to deceive his Protestant subjects into a persuasion that he would befriend those of their religion in the Low Countries, and by thus obtaining their confidence, to put them off their guard. Herein he was but too successful. Seduced by this artifice, the principal leaders of the Protestant party resorted to Paris, where they shortly after became the victims of their credulity, in that general massacre which was made of them in the month of August, of the year Fifteen Hundred and Seventy-two. In this manner terminated the first promises of assistance made on the part of France to the Confederates in the Low Countries.

ABOUT six years after this event, Henry the Third, successor to his brother Charles the Ninth, though he allowed Francis Duke of Alençon, his next brother, to repair to the Confederates, and place himself at their head, according to their invitation, yet he behaved so as to convince them that his intentions were far from favourable to their interests.

THE conduct of Francis himself was so full of treachery, that they were happy to be released

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from

from such a connection. After his departure, and his relinquishment of the trust he had so basely betrayed, they could not prevail upon Henry to give them any assistance. The truth was, that he waited for the critical moment when the Confederates should be reduced to such straits, as to offer him his own conditions for the protection he should afford them. His intention was to avail himself of their distress, to compel them to submit implicitly to France, and acknowledge him for their sovereign. Nor was he deceived in his expectation of the difficulties which he foresaw they would have to encounter: they were such as to constrain them to come into the measure he had in view. They offered him the sovereignty of their country; but, fortunately for them, he was no longer in a condition to act as he had proposed; and was, much against his inclination, obliged to decline the offer. His own affairs were in such disorder, and he had so much to apprehend from the league that had been formed against him by the majority of his subjects, that after temporizing with the Deputies of the States, as long as he could frame any pretext to keep them in suspense, he was compelled at last to dismiss them with a refusal of the sovereignty, which, according to his wishes, their necessities had forced them to make him a proffer of.

Thus it appears, that the real drift of the politics of France was by no means to co-operate  
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with the Dutch in the establishment of their Commonwealth, but to subject them to its own dependence. This would certainly have been their fate, had not a more propitious destiny averted this fatal blow, which would have involved them in as great calamities as those they were striving to avoid, and would, in truth, have only proved the exchange of one tyranny for another.

DURING the remainder of the reign of Henry the Third, they received not the least help from him; on the contrary, he stood in much more need of theirs, and would have gladly accepted of it, so great were his embarrassments.

AFTER the murder of this unhappy Prince by the hands of fanaticism, his successor Henry the Fourth, first King of France of the family of Bourbon, was equally unable, at his accession to the Throne, to testify any more than his bare good-will to the Dutch; while these, on the other hand, espoused his cause with a warmth and a sincerity which ought never to have departed from the memory of his posterity.

THE situation of this celebrated Prince, at the commencement of his reign, deserves to be particularly recorded, and will shew how great were his obligations to that people. The league against his predecessor not only continued, but had gathered so much strength, as to threaten him with an exclusion from the Throne: the Courts of Rome and of Spain were exerting themselves to

this purpose with all the vigour and spirit which ambition and superstition can jointly inspire.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great difficulties with which the Dutch themselves were combating at this time, they took the resolute and generous determination to succour that Prince in his adversity. We read in the cotemporary Historians of those tempestuous times, that shortly after the death of Henry the Third, the States of the United Provinces remitted to his successor a large sum of money and immense quantities of stores and provisions, attended with a considerable squadron of ships of war. This happened in Fifteen Hundred and Eighty-nine, at a season when his affairs seemed desperate; most of his followers had left him, his friends had lost almost all courage, and his troops were disbanded for want of pay.

In the following year a large Spanish fleet came to the assistance of the League, and landed a strong body of forces in Britany. The Dutch immediately fitted out an armament, which opposed that of Spain with success: it took their Admiral, made many other prizes, and effectually prevented the landing of those troops that were coming from Spain in great numbers.

In Fifteen Hundred and Ninety-one, the States selected some thousands of their bravest veterans for the service of that Prince, who had projected the siege of Rouen, and had requested them to

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furnish him with some of their best troops to assist him upon that important occasion. This reinforcement consisted entirely of soldiers picked out of the various bodies which composed their armies; and, considering the skill and valour of the men, was esteemed far superior to a common army: nor should it be forgotten, that it was accompanied with a fleet of no less than five-and-forty men of war, to protect the coasts of France from any attempt on the part of Spain.

DURING the next year the Dutch were no less active in favouring the designs of Henry against his enemies in France, by preventing the Duke of Parma from marching into that kingdom with the powerful army he had under his command for that purpose. This was a diversion of such importance to Henry, that most of the subsequent successes which contributed so highly to the recovery of his Kingdom, were justly attributed to it.

In consequence of the services done to him by the Dutch, as well as by the English, the fortune of this Prince was so decisively altered to his advantage in the succeeding year, that it no longer remained dubitable that he would overcome the party which opposed his possession of the Crown.

THE year Fifteen Hundred and Ninety-four was equally signalized by the united bravery of the English and Dutch troops in France. They took from the Spaniards the towns they had seized, and the strong fortresses they had erected



erected in Britany, and by driving them out of that province, delivered Henry from the most formidable enemy that remained in his Kingdom.

Thus Henry found himself, through the fidelity and courage of his English and Dutch allies, in the possession of a realm of which he had once but little hope of ever becoming the master. Through the continuance of the aid given him by that alliance, he waged a successful war the four ensuing years against Spain, forcing it to sue for peace upon terms highly advantageous to him.

THE conduct of the States made so powerful an impression on the mind of this great Prince, that he scrupled not to acknowledge the obligations they had conferred upon him in the warmest and most explicit manner. To do justice to his character, he fully merited them by the frankness and candour with which he avowed them in the face of the world. He directed his Ambassador to do it by word of mouth in his name to the States-General at the Hague; and he wrote them himself a letter, which is yet extant, and wherein he confesses, in the clearest and strongest language, that he had met in the Dutch with the most sincere, active, and useful friends that he could possibly have found; and that he considered himself as bound by every tie of gratitude to render them every service that Providence might enable him to perform. Such were the sentiments of the first and greatest Monarch of the House of Bourbon, of which the exaltation to the Throne

Throne of France may, without any exaggeration, be esteemed in no small measure owing to the generous and powerful efforts of the Seven United Provinces, at a time when it was on the point of being overwhelmed by the multitude and the inveteracy of its enemies.

In return for the important services rendered to Henry the Fourth by the Dutch, it does not appear that he ever took up their cause with the same zeal they had done his. This, however, may be alledged on his side, that having made a solemn treaty of peace with Spain, he could not violate it so far as to espouse openly and formally the cause of the Seven United Provinces; and that the utmost he was able to do, considering the distressed situation of his own Kingdom, impoverished and almost desolated by civil wars that had lasted almost half a century, was to economise his revenues, so as to repay the great sums of money lent him by the Dutch, and reimburse them for the immense charges they had been at in the various succours they had furnished him with in the course of his wars.

It was indeed several years before he was able to liquidate his debt to Holland; and after he had accomplished this point, the principal aid he afforded the Dutch was to secure to them the united concurrence of France and England in their support, should it become indispensably necessary. This he did with a view of encouraging them to

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insist upon advantageous terms in the truce which was then in agitation, and was shortly after concluded between Spain and Holland.

NOR is it improper to remark, that notwithstanding this truce, the French Ministry had previously taken care to engage the States in a very strict alliance with France ; so highly did that Ministry think it the interest of their Master to bind the Dutch over to assist him at all events. This shews, at the same time, of what importance this assistance was esteemed by the French, and how firmly they were convinced it could be depended upon.

FROM all this it may justly be affirmed, that in the scale of reciprocal services between France and Holland at that period, the balance is incomparably in favour of the former. The benefits that Henry the Fourth received were of the most essential and positive nature ; those which he returned were in some respects indirect, and fell far short in weight and consequence of those which he had experienced. He owed in some degree his Crown to the Dutch ; but they derived little more than his countenance, and promises of support, in case they should not be able to stand their ground without it.

BEFORE this subject is dismissed, historical impartiality requires one not to pass over a suspicion which prevailed at that time among the shrewdest of the Dutch. They imagined that Henry, in



in the midst of the affection and good-will he expressed for the States, entertained a secret wish and design to bring the Provinces under his subjection. Grotius, who was certainly no enemy to France, seems to have suspected him of such an intent; and the dispatches to some of his Ministers lead one to give credit to it. This, if true, is another of those many proofs how little we are to rely upon gratitude in political transactions.

FROM the unfortunate death of Henry the Fourth to the Ministry of Cardinal Richelieu, a space of fifteen years, the connection between France and Holland was very weak and imperfect; but that able Minister was too clear-sighted not to restore it to its primitive strength and stability. Conscious that the interests of France demanded a firm union with Holland, he made it his business to renew the treaties with the States, and to engage them to espouse the cause of France with all possible vigour.

THE situation of that Kingdom was at this period extremely critical. The two Branches of the House of Austria were become so intimately united, as manifestly to threaten the liberties of all their neighbours. The Royal Branch in Spain was extending its power over all Italy, and had recommenced the war in the Low Countries with unusual success. The Imperial Branch in Germany, after crushing the Elector Palatine, kept the whole Protestant party in the profoundest awe, and menaced the Empire with total subjection.

In such circumstances, the French Minister saw the necessity of making friends of the Dutch, and of diverting them from a reconciliation with Spain, which would have frustrated the many projects he had formed for the humiliation of the House of Austria, and the exaltation of that of Bourbon. He had the address to prevail upon the States to enter into a negotiation, of which the advantages were entirely on his side. They were bound, in consideration of a trifling subsidy, to continue the war against Spain with the utmost vigour, and to conclude neither peace nor truce without the intervention of France. Other articles highly beneficial to it were inserted in this treaty; in which it was universally allowed the Cardinal over-reached and outwitted the States in a manner hitherto unprecedented, and which little accorded with the reputation they had acquired for political wisdom.

Thus did the Dutch inconsiderately involve themselves in enterprizes, of which the consequences were in the issue very different from those they had proposed. But they did not perceive the artifice of the French Minister, till he had entangled them so far, that they knew not how to recede from the engagements they had entered into so unadvisedly.

THE first proof of the duplicity of the French Minister, was the employment of the naval force which they were to furnish to France. It was stipulated

pulated in the treaty to be intended against the Republic of Genoa, then leagued with Spain, but was employed in quite a different service.

THE Protestant party in France had lately been driven by ill usage to take up arms in defence of the rights and privileges solemnly granted to them by the Edict of Nantz. The Court, of which the intent was to subject them to implicit obedience, had taken the determination to do it by force; and was preparing to besiege Rochelle, which was in a manner the capital of the Protestant party. Their Chiefs, on the other hand, were no less resolute in opposing the Court. One of them, the famous Duke of Soubise, was at the head of an armament which commanded all the coasts of France on the ocean. The Cardinal, in whose time the French Government had no regular marine, requested the States to permit the fleet which they had fitted out against Genoa, to be employed against the Duke of Soubise. This was certainly an hazardous request, the Protestant party having always been considered as intimately united in interests with the Dutch. But the ascendancy which the Cardinal had obtained over the States, overcame the natural repugnance they felt at so unexpected a demand; they had the weakness to consent to his desire, as much to his own surprize as that of their Protestant brethrers.

BUT in default of the States, there were not wanting individuals in Holland bold enough to



signify openly their disapprobation of such impolitic measures, and which were at the same time so inconsistent with the religious principles they professed. The Protestant Clergy throughout the United Provinces were in particular loud and vehement in reprobating the conduct of their Rulers, and filled their sermons with the bitterest complaints against it. But their zeal was exerted in vain, and the Dutch fleet received orders to act according to the directions of the French Court.

THROUGH this debility in the Councils of the States, was the severest blow given to the Protestant cause in France that it had ever experienced. It was justly attended by the degradation of their character, and the loss of that respect and confidence which the Protestants in all Europe had hitherto reposed in them.

To their spiritless compliance on this occasion may be fairly ascribed the utter downfall of the Protestants in France: it threw them into the deepest consternation at being thus not only forsaken, but meanly betrayed by those whom they had so long looked upon as their protectors and associates.

THE immediate effect of this conduct of the Dutch was, that the Duke of Soubise was obliged to retire before their fleet; and his brother, the Duke of Rohan, lost the advantages he had obtained at land, and was forced to yield to the great  
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superiority of strength which the Court was enabled to bring against him. This was owing entirely to the security the French were in from the attacks of Spain, which was assailed both at sea and land by the Dutch, and wholly employed in waging war in the Low Countries with this formidable enemy.

THE loss of Rochelle, then besieged by Louis the Thirteenth and Cardinal Richelieu, was the next consequence. The surrender of this important city to that Monarch, put an end to all further opposition from the Protestants to the encroachments of the Court. It lorded it over them despotically ever after, and lost all manner of respect for their privileges; which during many years became the sport of Government, till they were at last totally abolished by a formal revocation of the Edict of Nantz, accompanied by the severest treatment and persecution of all the Protestants in France.

It was deemed necessary to enter into this deduction of the effects resulting from the flagitious complaisance of the States for Cardinal Richelieu; as it shews in the clearest light how pernicious the connection between France and Holland proved to the latter, and to the whole Protestant cause, which was evidently sacrificed to this inauspicious and impolitic alliance. It was manifestly framed and continued merely through the intrigues and contrivance of that crafty Statesman, and openly

reprobated by the most judicious people in Holland, as well as the clear-sighted and intelligent in other parts.

WHILE the States were thus forgetting the duty they owed to their constituents, the French Court was improving this opportunity to its utmost extent, for the carrying of every purpose that ambition and rapacity could suggest. Instead of making suitable returns for the partiality so warmly testified in its favour, it was setting every engine to work for the detriment of these too manageable allies. Never did the genius of craft and dissimulation appear more fully in its genuine colours, than in the conduct of Cardinal Richelieu at this memorable period. Notwithstanding the continual and eminent services rendered to him by the States, he could not refrain from conceiving the treacherous design of depriving the Stadtholder of his hereditary patrimony. To this intent he bribed the Governor of the City and Principality of Orange, to deliver them into his hands. The plot indeed was defeated through its timely discovery; but the infamy of the Cardinal's behaviour rendered him an object of suspicion and secret execration ever after. It effectually opened the eyes of the Dutch to his real character, and taught them to consider him as a faithless ally, void of all principle either of generosity or common justice. From this moment they remained united with France merely from a point



point of honour, and with a view as it were to make his behaviour appear the more contemptible, by contrasting it with the integrity of their own.

It was in consequence of this treachery on the part of France, that the States thought it necessary to hearken to the proposals of the Spanish Ministry for a pacification; to which they were the more inclined, as England offered its mediation and guarantee in their favour.

ALARMED at such an interference, the Cardinal employed every resource of his fertile genius to render it of no efficacy. To the great prejudice of the Dutch, and against the general expectation of the world, he again succeeded, and kept them several years longer under his management, to the prodigious benefit of France, and disadvantage of Europe; which may date from this epocha the rise and progress of the ambitious projects of that Monarchy.

THE succours which this artful Minister drew from the States astonished all those who reflected how little they were merited, how much they militated against the real interest of the United Provinces, and how unfavourable the conditions of the alliance were to them. The infatuation of the ruling people in Holland seemed to keep pace with, and add fresh assurance to the French Minister. In order to lead them into such measures as should make it extremely difficult to recede from

from their connections with France, he proposed to them the conquest and partition of the Spanish Low Countries. By the circumstances accompanying this proposal, it sufficiently appeared, that whatever the issue of the project might finally prove, it would not fail to answer the chief end he had in view; which was to extend the frontiers of France, by the conquest of the contiguous places belonging to Spain. This was chiefly to be effected by the assistance of the Dutch. They were bound by the articles of the famous Treaty of Sixteen Hundred and Thirty-five, concluded at the Hague, for the purpose of conquering and dividing the Spanish Netherlands, to be at the sole charge of maintaining a formidable armament on the coast of Flanders, in order to oppose the naval strength of Spain, and that of England, should it interfere, as it was apprehended; and by thus preventing all succours from either of these powers, to facilitate the progress of the French arms in Flanders. They were by the same articles to furnish an equal number of land forces with the French.

THE advantages of this celebrated Treaty were so clearly and so entirely on the side of France, that nothing was gained by the Dutch but a great increase of reputation; while the profit remained exclusively to the French. Their limits were extended on every side of the kingdom, and such an augmentation of its power ensued, as began to excite universal attention and alarm.

IN the mean time, so pressing and so successful were the solicitations of the French negociators at the Hague, that had the Dutch been contending for their very existence, they could not have made greater exertions than those which, through the finesse of these ministers, they were induced to make, in order to second the operations of France.

NEVER were the views of the French more effectually answered. This was the more remarkable, as the instruments they employed were such as in good policy ought never to have been put into their hands. But this was an æra of fascination in their favour: those proved their warmest friends and supporters on this occasion, who had precisely the most to apprehend from their growing prosperity.

SUCH was the zeal, or rather the delusion of the Dutch, that, contrary to the admonitions that were given them from every quarter, they suffered the Councils of France to prevail over their own, and to impel them to such an excess of imprudence, as to take a solemn determination to put forth their whole strength at sea, for the total destruction of that of Spain.

MANY motives, it has been reported, contributed to this determination, besides those which arose from their alliance with France. But the wisest politicians of the time concurred in blaming them for not perceiving the terrible  
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breach that would be made in the balance of power, by destroying that of Spain in the manner to which they were urged by the French.

IN consequence of the fatal influence which governed the States at that period, a fleet of more than one hundred ships of war was put under the command of the celebrated Van Tromp, which struck the Spaniards with such terror, and kept the coasts of Spanish Flanders in such a state of intimidation, as afforded every opportunity the French could have desired, to push their conquests in that country.

THE Court of Spain expressed the greatest astonishment at this imprudent conduct of the States, and was not remiss in reminding them how much they acted against their own interest, and even the very safety of the Republic, in pursuing such violent measures against a Power that was willing and desirous to be reconciled with them, and to grant them the most favourable terms they could require.

IN expectation that Holland might be brought to consider more attentively the steps it was about to take in favour of France, and at the same time to provide for a more effectual opposition to the designs of this latter, Spain, notwithstanding its declining condition, made the greatest effort on this emergency, that had ever been known since the days of the famous Armada, that had been fitted out against England. But the hopes she had formed  
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of a change of disposition in the States, were frustrated by the superior ascendancy of the French. It was in vain represented, that the power of France was, from the proximity of that kingdom, an object far more formidable than that of Spain, of which the resources were necessarily much exhausted by so long and ruinous a war; that the Spanish Provinces of the Netherlands were an indispensable barrier between the Republic and France, which, if once possessed of them, would quickly be mistress of the other seven; that it was therefore the interest of these to look no more with an hostile eye on the endeavours of Spain to maintain its ground against the French in the Low Countries; and that they ought no longer to impede the coming of those succours which were destined for that end. These and many other remonstrances, tending to detach them from France, and accompanied with the amplest and most advantageous offers for the procuring of a solid peace, were all rejected and rendered fruitless by the artful exertions of the French agents and emissaries. The day marked for the total overthrow of the power of Spain was now arrived, Van Tromp, at the head of his fleet, met the Spanish Armada, consisting of one hundred ships of war, and convoying a powerful land army. He attacked, and defeated it so completely, that out of this vast number hardly any escaped. This great event happened in Sixteen Hundred and

Thirty-nine; a year as fatal to Spain as Fifteen Hundred and Eighty-eight, when the Invincible Armada was destroyed by the English.

BUT whatever glory might accrue to the arms, no honour was done to the councils of the Dutch by this famous victory. It was undoubtedly a prodigious atchievement; but while it eternises the memory of the victors, it also transmits to posterity the imprudence of those Statesmen under whose auspices they acted.

IN this manner was established and confirmed the power of France, and the foundation laid of those calamities which, through the restless ambition of the rulers of that monarchy, desolated Europe during so many years. The ill policy of those who directed the affairs of the Dutch, may justly be considered as their fundamental cause. So truly was the conduct of the States reputed the principal means by which France obtained so many successes, that the very French themselves could not deny it. One of their Historians formally acknowledges that their victories and conquests were not less owing to the alliance with Holland, than to the bravery of their troops, and the abilities of their commanders.

ON the decease of Cardinal Richlieu, his successor in the French Ministry, Cardinal Mazarin, pursued his measures in Holland with the same success for some time. But the superiority of France becoming at last so manifest and dangerous



as to affect the safety of all its neighbours, the leading men among the States could no longer refuse to concur with those who thought it necessary to break off a connection that tended so evidently to their detriment. It had rendered them the mere instruments to aggrandize a Power, from whose disposition and situation they had every thing to fear, and engaged them totally to ruin another, whose debilitated strength had long ceased to give them any apprehension.

REFLECTIONS of this kind brought about a determination to conclude a peace with Spain. Great was the displeasure of France at this change of politics in Holland. Many were the intrigues and machinations employed to bring matters back into their former track; but the views of France were so manifestly dictated by mere ambition, and the peril of co-operating with them so great, that no reasonings could prevail upon the States to decline the offers of Spain, and to terminate a war with that monarchy, the latter part of which had been waged purely in complianee with the solicitations of France, and through the ascendancy she had gained over them, and contrary to what the intelligent in every country in Europe knew, and often represented to be their true interest.

THIS conduct of the States was, by the adherents and tools of France, censured as the height of ingratitude. One would have thought by the discourses and writings of the French at this period,

riod, that the Dutch were the subjects of France, instead of its allies, and had committed the basest infidelity in relinquishing its cause. No criminalities were deemed too injurious, no epithets too opprobrious for them : they were treated like traitors who had conspired against their Prince, and stigmatized as deserters who had fled from their colours in the day of battle.

SUCH has constantly been the language of the French, when speaking of the Peace made by the States with Spain, in order to procure its recognition of their independence : it continues to this day, as it were by prescription. Yet certainly the French could not alledge one valid argument against a pacification, from which no other detriment accrued to them, than a simple refusal of the Dutch to sacrifice their welfare to the ambitious projects of France.

WHEN Henry the Fourth concluded a Treaty of Peace with Spain, in order to relieve himself from the burden of war, after he had attained the secure possession of his kingdom, the States, tho' highly prejudiced by this measure, did not however exhale their discontent in harsh and indecent reproaches : they bore this abandonment of them with fortitude, notwithstanding it was a heavy and unexpected blow.

AFTER a precedent of this nature, little could the Dutch have expected that France would have branded them with so much ignominy, for putting  
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end to a contest of fourscore years continuance, at a time when France stood in no further need of their services, and was arrived at the summit of power and reputation through their assistance.

A COMPARISON of the respective circumstances of France and of Holland at those two different periods, will not redound to the honour of the former. In Fifteen Hundred and Ninety-eight, when the peace of Vervins took place, France left Holland in a most dangerous and difficult situation; but when Holland treated with Spain at Munster, in Sixteen Hundred and Forty-eight, France was victorious and triumphant every where, and daily rising into power on the spoils and ruins of the House of Austria. Germany had been torn from the Emperor; in Italy the scale preponderated against Spain; Portugal had thrown off its yoke, and Catalonia revolted; and in Flanders the arms of France carried all before them.

Thus it appears, that the only design of France in protracting the war, was to improve the good fortune attending her. The disappointment she felt at the unwillingness of the Dutch to submit as heretofore to be subservient to her selfish views, was an offence which her pride could not forgive; and of which, from that moment, she bore so deep a resentment, that no opportunity was omitted to gratify it.

When we ponder on the incidents that have been related, we cannot refuse our assent to the  
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justness of the ideas of a political writer at that time, who compared the connection between France and Holland to the alliance made by the lion with some other animals, who were unable to derive any profit from it.

THE truth is, that, according to the fundamental maxims adopted by the wisest heads in the United Provinces, no such alliances as were proposed by France could in anywise accord with their interest. These maxims recommended, above all things, peace and friendliness with their neighbours, and the cultivation of commerce with all nations.

ACCORDING to those maxims, none but defensive alliances were proper to be formed. Their politics forbade them to be the aggressors; such a conduct being contradictory to the spirit of trade, which was to be the basis of their prosperity and very existence.

THEIR welfare and safety depending greatly on the preservation of peace among their neighbours, the chief aim of the Dutch ought to have been limited to the maintenance of tranquility among them; as while Europe is involved in disputes, they cannot fail to partake of the common disturbances.

UNHAPPILY for the Dutch, however the observance of these maxims may have been uppermost in their minds, their Rulers have been prevailed upon, as it appears, by foreign influence  
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and seduction, on several occasions, to depart from them. They have also, according to the never-failing rule of Politics, suffered severely for this imprudent deviation.

AFTER the pacification above-mentioned, notwithstanding the inconveniencies which they must have foreseen would infallibly result from their having so largely contributed to the rise of France, and the depression of Spain, they still quietly permitted, without any kind of interference, the power of the former to increase to such a height, as almost to exceed all hope of being reduced within just bounds.

INSTEAD of taking timely measures to oppose it, by connecting themselves with Spain, as they were solicited, and as it was evidently their duty, they rashly engaged in a war with England, which might have been avoided, and from which they were sure that nothing but mischiefs could arise. Led by the same infatuation, they passively beheld a league formed between England and France against Spain, as if the latter were not sufficiently depressed, or the former enough exalted.

It has often been said, that no State in Europe ever conducted its foreign concerns with more prudence and discretion than the States-General of the United Provinces. The general truth of this assertion may be admitted; it may even be acknowledged to be strictly true in all

instances, one only excepted. But this exception is a fatal one, and has proved the source of more misfortune, to them than if they had erred in many points, provided they had acted wisely in this one.

THIS exception falls on that object to which their principal attention was directed from the commencement of the Republic; the terms on which they stood, and ought to stand with France. They knew, as well as the other States of Europe, that craftiness and subtlety were the characteristics of the French in their public intercourse with foreign nations. Their own experience quickly taught them how well founded this opinion was, and how many beside themselves had good reason to allow its justness. Yet nothing is clearer, than that notwithstanding they ought, conformably to this belief, to have acted with the utmost caution with so acute and designing a people, they conducted themselves as if they had been dealing with men of the utmost openness and candour—strangers to all dissimulation, and abhorrent of deceit.

FRENCH Negotiators, to do them justice, yield to none in the talent of exhibiting themselves to the best advantage. They excel particularly in the art of impressing those with whom they are treating, with favourable ideas of their character, and especially in that of rendering their persons



sons acceptable by the pleasingness of their conversation, and the gracefulness of their manners. These are qualifications of which the utility is often greater than the profoundest knowledge in political matters. It may very much be doubted, whether they have not more real influence in the transaction of all affairs, both public and private, than more substantial and valuable qualities.

How so wary and circumspect a people as the Dutch could be so frequently, it may be said so continually, governed by the French Ministers, is a matter of astonishment ; and leads one to suspect, that other methods of persuasion might not unfrequently be used by these active Negotiators, in order to bring them over to their measures.

BUT exclusive of those interested motives, of which the prevalence is so powerful over most men, the French found many other mediums whereby to insure success. The factious spirit that arose from domestic altercations, and the personal quarrels that were soon matured into national feuds, opened a large field for the exercise of their abilities for intrigue.

To these intestine divisions, much doubtless of the constant success of the French in their negotiations with the Dutch, must unquestionably be ascribed. These divisions grew more open and detrimental than ever, after the peace of Munster ; which, by recognizing the independence of the United Provinces, and placing them on a

firm footing of security, quieted their minds against apprehensions from abroad; and thereby prepared them to indulge with more readiness and warmth in those concerns that had given rise to diversity of sentiments and of attachments at home.

It was in a great measure the differences occasioned by party, that kept the States in so remarkable a temper of passiveness and forbearance to interpose in any shape between the two great Powers abovementioned; the one contending for an undue supremacy, the other for an equality of consideration in the system of European Policy,

BUT that which principally contributed to their dissensions at home, and of course to their unconcern at what was transacting abroad, was their deprivation of the Stadtholdership. While that office subsisted, it effectually moderated the violence of Parties; and if it did not suppress, still kept them under. But on its entire cessation, which happened shortly after the peace of Munster, internal discords broke out with so much vehemence, that though they did not occasion hostilities, they divided the Republic in two parties; of which the reciprocal animosity was so virulent, that it engrossed all their attention, and left them no leisure nor inclination to attend so much as their interest required, to what was doing among their neighbours.

THE party which favoured the exclusion of a Stadtholder, being in possession of the whole strength of the State, resolved, at all events, never to relinquish their advantages, and to sacrifice every thing to their preservation. In order to secure themselves the more firmly, they formed an intimate coalition with France; which gladly embraced this opportunity to recover her footing in Holland.

THE first use which the French Ministry made of this renewal of their former connection, was to foment the quarrel that had unhappily taken place between England and Holland, not long after the restoration of Charles the Second to the English Throne. After destroying the power of Spain by the assistance of the Dutch, the next intended exploit of their politics was to destroy that of England by the same means.

FORTUNATELY for England and Holland, they desisted in time; but not without having done each other damage enough to embolden France to throw off the mask, and to commence those operations which were the ultimate view of her Politics. But they excited such an alarm, that the States, clearly perceiving at what they aimed, were constrained to alter the whole system of their conduct, and to join with England in order to arrest the progress of the French arms. This was effectually done by the Treaty of Alliance concluded between Charles and the States in Sixteen Hundred and Sixty-Eight.



DISABLED by this measure from prosecuting the ambitious schemes she had so much at heart, France determined, that as Holland would not be subservient to her in compassing them, other Powers should be made the instruments of wreaking the vengeance she meditated upon Holland for this dereliction of her; as if the States were in duty bound implicitly to concur in all her designs, and were not entitled to have a will as well as interests of their own.

THE haughtiness and insolence with which the Court of France treated the States on this occasion, has hardly a precedent in History. It began indeed by temporising. It concealed the rage it felt at being thus disappointed; but it neglected under-hand no means of carrying its revenge into the most effectual and severe execution. The very Power which, next to Holland, was the most concerned in opposing France, was precisely that which French artifice endeavoured, and, strange to tell! found means to detach from the States and to render their enemy, in the same manner as it had before prevailed upon these to make war upon that Power.

THUS strengthened by the flagitious assistance of England, and by the help of the German Princes bordering on the United Provinces, France knew no longer any bounds to her pride. She was now surrounded by a multitude of allies, seduced by her promises, and by other methods

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much in practice with the French at that time, and through which they effected many, if not most of their enterprizes.

WELL might the States be equally alarmed and surpris'd at so unexpected and unnatural a combination. But they were told with great justice by a Spanish Minister at the Hague, that they themselves were the original fabricators of the present designs of France, by their former exertions in support of its projects, in spite of incessant admonitions of the danger to which they exposed themselves, by working so zealously for a Power which alone would reap the fruit of their labour, and would become their enemy as soon as it had compleated the plan in which they were so unadvisedly co-operating.

THE time for dissimulation being expired, and the immense preparations against the United Provinces filling them with consternation, they respectfully applied to the King of France for an elucidation of his intent—offering, if he thought himself offended, to give him all due satisfaction. But he disdain'd to enter into any discussion; overbearingly giving them to understand, that his resolutions were taken and irrevocable, and that they were not to expect any accommodation. In his declaration of war he preserved the same haughtiness of stile, alledging no other motive for attacking them than his discontent at their proceedings.

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It is needless to recount the barbarities committed by the French in their invasion of the United Provinces, the cruelties of the soldiery, and the extortions of money from the inhabitants, together with the insulting treatment of the Deputies whom they sent to deprecate the wrath of the inexorable Louis.

WHEN through the restoration of the Stadtholdership, the alteration of measures in England, and the assistance of other Powers, the United Provinces had resisted the French, and driven them out of their country, still the intrigues of the Court of France were employed in sowing discord among the ruling men in Holland, and in forming a party to oppose the government, in which they too well succeeded.

It was owing to this that, after having made the peace of Nimeguen, the French Ministry refused to observe it. In defiance of the articles by which a barrier was granted to the Dutch in the Low Countries, the towns of which it consisted were seized; and in further violation of all faith and decency, the Principality of Orange was again invaded, by way of expressing the resentment of France at the spirited conduct of the Stadtholder, the noble stand he had made in defence of the States, and the repeated checks he had given to the French arms in Flanders.

NEVER did the utility of this important office appear with more conspicuity than upon this occasion;



caſion; nor ever did the temper of the faction that oppoſed it, ſhew itſelf in more genuine colours. Depending upon the ſtrength of this faction, France inſolently trampled upon all the obligations ſhe had laid herſelf under at the general pacification, and acted with an arrogance that excited the indignation of all Europe. The States, on the preſſing remonſtrances of the Stadtholder, were induced to expoſtulate with great courage on ſuch barefaced infractions of a Treaty, which had proved ſo advantageous to France, and which, for that reaſon, ſhe ought to have obſerved with the utmoſt punctuality. But emboldened by the ſupport of a party which would, at all events, eſpouſe its cauſe, France haughtily ſlighted theſe representations. As they were made through the influence of the Stadtholder, ſhe had no apprehenſions of their being inſiſted upon, well knowing ſhe could render them ineffectual by means of thoſe who were devoted to her, in conſequence of their antipathy to the office, and to him that held it.

NOR was the Miniſtry of Louis the Fourteenth deceived in the ideas they had formed of the temper and diſpoſition of the faction adverſe to the Stadtholder. It thwarted his endeavours to do juſtice to his country, and to aſſert its dignity and rights againſt the violations of France, with as much violence as if he had been a declared enemy. Not content with putting a ſimple ne-

gative on his proposals for the common service of the State, it combined with such fury against him, as to endanger the peace of the Republic, and almost to precipitate it into a civil war. In contempt of the sovereignty and independence of their country, this treacherous party meanly applied for assistance to the French Ambassador at the Hague, requesting him to procure from France a body of troops to enable them to compel their adversaries to come into their measures. This memorable transaction happened in Sixteen Hundred and Eighty-Four; a year in which, through the intrigues of her Agents, France was corrupting and dictating to almost all the Courts in Europe; and was on the point of subverting the Constitution of the United Provinces, through the treasonable co-operation of the faction which opposed the person and dignity of the Stadtholder.

FACTS such as these, the authenticity of which cannot be called in question, and which have not in the least been exaggerated, ought, one should think, to cover with confusion the enemies to the House of Orange, and to the office with which it has so long been invested. They form an irrefragable argument of the necessity of considering that office as the most impenetrable shield to the secret or open malevolence of the enemies of the United Provinces, and warn these never to suffer any machinations to procure either its abolition or suspension.

It is peculiarly remarkable, that in the midst of his grandeur and successes, there was no person of whom Louis the Fourteenth stood more in awe than the Stadtholder William the Third. He complained of him as the bitterest enemy to France, and as the main impediment to his designs. This was long before that Prince had been raised to the Throne of England, and while he possessed only the office of Stadtholder. Hence we may infer of what importance that office must be in the Constitution of Holland, since, notwithstanding the powerful faction against it, formed and supported by the Emissaries of France, it was still able to act so effectually against that kingdom.

THIS efficacy of strength and resistance in that eminent post, rendered it, of course, extremely odious to that ambitious Monarch. Though he could not procure its abolition, he lost no opportunity of diminishing its influence, and of inflaming against it all the partizans of the Aristocracy. They were always sure of finding him a ready friend to their enterprizes in its prejudice; and were, on the other hand, no less inclined to abet his designs, in hope of their affording them some time or other an opportunity of regaining the superiority, and abolishing that office.

So inveterate was the hatred of that Monarch to this dignity, and so highly was he solicitous to infuse his own sentiments into the States, that



on the demise of William, he could not refrain from congratulating them on that event. Though this was done in an indirect manner, yet it sufficiently convey'd his meaning. The congratulation alluded to, was contained in a Memorial presented by the French Resident at the Hague, at the latter end of March, Seventeen Hundred and Two, wherein he expostulates with them, in the name of his master, on the intentions they expressed of joining the confederacy against the Bourbon Family, on its succeeding to the Crown of Spain.

A GREAT part of this Memorial is evidently intended as a sort of felicitation on the Republic's being, through the decease of the Stadtholder, again restored to itself, to the exertion of its own spirit, and the prosecution of its real interest. It holds out a prospect of amity and reciprocal services, and invites the States to a renewal of their former connections by the most flattering promises. All these, however, rest clearly upon a supposition, that they were no longer to remain under the controul of a Stadtholder.

In compliance with the views of the French Ministry, every Frenchman that has taken upon him to treat of the Government of the United Provinces, has warmly inveighed against the Stadtholdership. It is represented as a dangerous office, tending to abridge the liberty of the Republic,

public, and to convert it in fact into a Monarchy, under the absolute direction of that great Officer; who, under the pretence of executing the orders and resolutions of the State, frames and guides them according to his own discretion, through the open authority he possesses in every public department, civil and military, and the secret influence he thence is able to exert in all deliberations.

SUCH is the description given of the office of a Stadtholder by the pens of French writers. But the fallacy of this representation has already been shewn in the antecedent pages, by an impartial examination of the prerogatives annexed to this dignity, and the various checks attending it. By these it appears, that the name appropriated to it is truly importive of its meaning; a Stadtholder being, in strict reality, the Holder and Conservator of the State, instituted for the purpose of presiding over its executive powers, and directing their operations to the best advantage. He may undoubtedly attain to so high a degree of weight and credit, as effectually to enjoy the Government of the State. But this, when it happens, must arise entirely from his merit and abilities, and the esteem and confidence resulting from them.

SINCE the demise of William III. the French pretend, that more prosperity has been experienced in the space that elapsed between that epocha and the elevation of William IV. to the Stadtholdership, than during any other period.

BUT

BUT as political felicity can only be estimated comparatively, if we advert to facts, we shall find this to be an assertion without proof. The circumstances of Europe, rightly considered, are a sufficient refutation. During the abovementioned period, there was not a single State in the North of this part of the world, which did not considerably augment its trade and navigation. Those of France and Great Britain increased in a proportion that suffers no comparison to what they were in the last Century. But nothing is more certain on the other hand, than that the commercial marine of the United Provinces did not receive a proportionable augmentation. Their navy visibly declined, and many of their manufactures lost ground.

IN the mean time, their political consequence was every where on the wane. Instead of that respect with which they had been wont to impress foreign Potentates and nations, they were considered merely as an industrious, pains-taking people, avid of gain, and ready to undergo all hazards for that end.

TRUE it is, that during that period they carefully abstained from giving the least umbrage to the Court of France. They watched its motions, not with an eye of jealousy, but of deference and condescension to its requisitions and interests. In return for this pacific and passive disposition, they have been complimented with the epithet of a  
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wise and discreet people, by those among the French, who make it their business to represent all the opposers of their designs as prompted by illiberal and despicable motives, such as envy and malevolence, and other base and ungenerous passions. Suggestions of this kind are usually levelled at the people and politics of England; against which the favourers and emissaries of France labour with peculiar zeal to prepossess the inhabitants of Holland.

THIS leads us naturally to observe, that the endeavours of the French to alienate the Dutch from the English, have, unfortunately for both, proved but too successful. In the war of Seventeen Hundred and Forty, the conduct of the States, in consequence of the intrigues of France, was faint and lukewarm in the common cause of both nations; and till the restoration of the Stadtholdership, though their armies had taken the field, their operations were evidently weak and spiritless. In the war before the last, the Dutch, as already observed, beheld our successes with an hostile eye; and in the last they espoused the interest of all our enemies with a marked ill will, and readiness to act against this country.

It is no less notorious, that their enmity to the Stadtholdership has gone hand in hand with their aversion for the English, and their attachment to the French. This is a circumstance highly deserving of the consideration of England in its present condition.

condition. It shews that, independently of the interest of Holland, it is also that of England, to support the cause of those who espouse that of the Stadtholder.

In the reign of Charles the Second, the propriety of acting a spirited part in its favour, was well understood by the English Ministry. Exclusive of the Family-connection between that Monarch and the House of Orange, other powerful motives subsisted to engage England to uphold that Prince in the dignities of his ancestors. Unless this was done effectually, the enemies to this House, and the function annexed to it, would, it was well known, have soon found means to annihilate his authority, through the intervention of France; of which the influence and interest would of course have preponderated in Holland, to the great and infallible detriment of England.

Guided by these considerations, when the English Ministry concluded that Treaty of Alliance with the States in Sixteen Hundred and Sixty-Eight, which was intended as a final obliteration of all former feuds between both countries, and as a sincere renovation of their primitive amity, the Court of England directed its negociators in that Treaty, to recommend in the powerfullest terms to the States, the interests of the Prince of Orange.

The Court of France, on the other hand, was not less active in thwarting his advancement; conscious

scious that the office with which the English Monarch was desirous to see him invested, would prove a formidable obstruction to its views.

THE contest, however, was this time decided to the advantage of the House of Orange. Six out of the Seven Provinces expressed an unanimous concurrence in its behalf: that of Holland alone, governed by De Wit, head of the Aristocratic party, of which the inclinations were wholly French, manifested an averfeness to such a proposal. It was not brought over to concur with the others without many solicitations, and much against its own opinion and approbation of the measure; neither would it have been carried, had not the Deputies of this Province been, as it were, shamed into it by the imminent danger with which the pretensions and enterprizes of France evidently threatened the Republic.

HAPPILY for the United Provinces, Charles the Second had not yet prostituted himself to Louis the Fourteenth; and in consequence of his right discernment of the true interests of his Kingdom and of Holland, was thoroughly convinced that the joint welfare of both required that the office of Stadtholder should be re-established. It may not be amiss to add, that had Charles continued in this disposition, the calamities that beset the United Provinces in consequence of his connecting himself with France, would not have happened, and he would have had the honour of procuring a peaceable restoration of the Stadtholdership.



• If such was the policy requisite for the prosperity of the English and Dutch at that time, no other can with safety for either of them be pursued at present. The power of France, though less brilliant perhaps, is as solid and substantial at least, at this day, as it was then. Possibly it were not difficult to shew, that it is actually become superior in a variety of respects.

THE wisdom of the States would ill deserve to be so highly extolled, as it often has with justice been, if they were not conscious of what is here asserted. But the power and influence of the French in so many parts of Europe, wonderful as it may appear, is not yet so marvellous as the passiveness and acquiescence of those who are most exposed to its consequences.

• No people are incontestibly more liable to experience them than those of the United Provinces. Great was the alarm they justly felt at the commencement of this Century, when the Spanish Low Countries were taken possession of by France in the name and by the authority of Spain, to secure them for a Prince of the House of Bourbon, on his inheritance of that monarchy. The circumstances of the present period are not indeed precisely similar in every point; but when we recollect how readily the House of Austria, in the last Century, would have resigned more than once its Flemish possessions to France for an equivalent elsewhere, and reflect at the same time

time upon the intimate footing on which those two potent Houses stand at this day, it may not appear altogether an idle surmise, that the United Provinces may again behold the French their nearest neighbours, when they least expect it.

THE present seems an age of revolutions. The constitution of Sweden is no more. Poland has been dismembered; and Great-Britain has lost America. The situation of the States and Princes of Germany is no longer the same; and who knows what further changes may be meditated by the great Powers on the Continent of Europe? This, without conjecture, one may rely upon, that ambition will lose no opportunity to be gratified; and there never were greater proofs of the excesses of which it is capable, than those which our own times have produced.

As national debility is the sure concomitant of internal feuds, and as enfeebled States are the natural objects of ambition, the Dutch would do well to recall to their minds, that what has befallen others may certainly happen to them, should those disorders continue that have already been carried to such a dangerous height.

THE only remedy for the effectual cure and future prevention of these disorders is, as it has been observed in the course of this performance, the restoration of the Stadtholder to all his authority: sufficient reasons, it is presumed, have been assigned in proof of the justness and necessity of this measure.

BUT, in addition to this, there is yet another measure equally necessary to be adopted. After having provided for their domestic tranquillity, it is surely a matter of no less importance to guard against dangers from abroad.

In order to compass this end, they need not be told that alliances must be formed ; but their conduct of late years authorises one to say, that they seem to have forgotten that the only alliances they should contract, ought to be with those Powers whose disposition and circumstances do not lay them open to the suggestions and influence of ambition, whose constant interest it is to be their friends, and who may, though fully competent to protect, never be able to bring them under subjection.

THIS description is particularly applicable to Great-Britain. Partiality to the faction that opposes the Stadtholder may deny it, in conjunction with the French and their abettors ; but facts, which are stronger than all arguments, bear witness to its truth, and establish it beyond the power of refutation.

LET the Dutch review the transactions that have happened since the foundation of their Republic. Will they discover in the English any other wish than to promote the combined interests of both Nations, and a constant willingness to assist the United Provinces to the utmost of their abilities, whenever they thought them in danger ?

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THE foes to England will possibly object the war in Cromwell's Protectorship, and those in the reign of Charles the Second; but the two first were evidently the mere ebullitions of commercial jealousy, which quickly subsided upon a cool recollection of their impropriety and absurdity. They were like the falling-out of intimate friends, who are soon reconciled, when they reflect on the trivial causes of their disagreement. The third of these wars was far from being the deed of the English Nation, which execrated it, and compelled their Monarch not only to make a peace, but to declare in favour of the Dutch.

SINCE that epocha, till the late hostilities during the American war, Great-Britain has ever regarded Holland as a Sister-State, united by those ties that have always been reputed the most binding, a similitude of political and religious principles, and a reciprocal necessity of standing by each other with fidelity and firmness, if they mean to secure their prosperity, and to baffle the designs of a Power, which, whatever its pretensions may be, can never, in the nature of things, become a sincere well-wisher to either of them.

By the same rule that Holland should attach itself to Great-Britain, on account of its ability to support and defend, and its incapacity to subdue that country, it ought carefully to avoid the putting itself under the protection of any Potentate,

tate, the immensity of whose power, added to his proximity, might induce him to aim at the sovereignty over the United Provinces, or whose ambition might render them subservient to his views. The application of this rule to France is founded on both these reasons.

FROM the preceding investigations, nothing is clearer, than that in the whole progress of its connections with the United Provinces, France had no other view than to make them the mere drudges of its ambitious undertakings. This design was so apparent and undeniable, that the States themselves could not sometimes refrain from making the French sensible that their alliance was in no wise conducive to the real benefit of Holland, which would willingly have been dispensed from co-operating in their schemes. It was partly through importunity, and partly, one may presume, by securing through clandestine means the interest of individuals in power, the French Negotiators succeeded so frequently in their applications, to the surprize and indignation of the unprejudiced part of the public; which clearly perceived that the connection subsisting between France and the United Provinces, was a glaring transgression of the rules of sound policy, and would finally redound to the great detriment of the Republic.

THE late rupture between Great-Britain and Holland was a sequel of the old plan of Dutch sub-

subserviency to French politics. To this when we add the designs entertained by Henry the Third of France, and imputed to Henry the Fourth, together with the treatment experienced by the United Provinces from Louis the Fourteenth, they indicate, without a possibility of mistake, the ultimate views of that Monarchy with respect to the Republic.

BUT it has long been the destiny of every State to become in its turn the dupe of France, in the transactions with its Ministers and negociators. This is a complaint of old standing among the European Powers. The Swedes, who were so instrumental during a considerable period of the last century in effecting the purposes of France, were often on the point of breaking with her, on account of the neglect which they experienced, and the readiness she manifested on every occasion to abandon all interests but her own.

PORTUGAL, in throwing off the yoke of Spain, met with no greater friendship from the French Court, notwithstanding the prodigious weight which that event had thrown into the scale of France.

OTHER instances might be adduced, to prove how dexterous the French Ministers have always been in availing themselves of the credulity of those who were willing to trust them. They have certainly made good the opinion entertained

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of them so long ago as the days of Philip de Commines the historian, who flourished at the end of the Fifteenth Century. Speaking of the negotiations depending between Louis the Eleventh of France and Edward the Fourth of England, he candidly acknowledges the character of artifice and finesse, attributed to the French in their political dealings with foreigners, and specifies in a particular manner the apprehensions of the English Ministers on that account, and how much they dreaded that they should be over-reached in the treaty which was then carrying on between the two Kings.

To sum up the premises they duly authorize one to conclude, that of all States, none have been more completely made the tools of France than those of the Seven United Provinces. After the detail of the various transactions between France and Holland that has here been given, and which is conformable to the strictest truth, it only remains to be explained from what motive any sensible Dutchman can feel himself interested in the cause of France, while he professes to be true to the real interest of his own country.

NONE, it is plain, can have its welfare at heart who, consulting facts and experience, can still favour a cause, of which the greatest and most dangerous enemies of their country have always been the constant and strenuous supporters. Such a circumstance alone evinces it not to be the cause of  
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their country, but that of its enemies; since it is ridiculous to suppose that they could otherwise embrace and patronize it with such animation and vigour, as they have never failed to display in its encouragement and defence.

THIS cause, of which France has so perseveringly and so industriously been the abettor and protector, is that of the Aristocracy. She nourished the seeds of it in the very infancy of the Republic; and when, thro' unforeseen casualties, they were, in an evil hour for the United Provinces, brought to a condition of maturity, she carefully vivified and gave them strength. While that system lasted, she held the States in subjection, through the fear they entertained, that to resist her would in fact be to revive the constitution which they had destroyed, as they well knew that no effectual resistance could be made without restoring it.

CONSCIOUS of this, they who held the reins of Government acted with a compliance to the views of that Court, which rendered it in a great measure absolute Mistress of all their motions; as they were averse, from the motive that has been assigned, to take any steps that might displease it.

THIS servile disposition, lasted so long, and was so predominant, that when, compelled by urgent necessity and the public clamours of their Fellow-citizens, they were prevailed upon, against their own inclinations, to act with a little more consistency

with the interest and safety of their country, they still retained their wonted timidity and dread of incurring the censure and condemnation of France, as if she had not been the capital enemy of the State, and employed at that very time in every contrivance that could be devised for its ruin.

To this spiritless and absurd apprehension of giving offence to that haughty Power, it was owing that they did not dare to behave with proper vigour. They proceeded as it were by halves, leaving the most material part undone, and still flattering themselves, that by condescendence and humility they might avert the storm, which, from base and sinister views, they were averse to meet with becoming courage.

THIS heartless conduct was dictated by the repugnance to call in the help of a Stadtholder; but the period was come, when no other expedient could have preserved the United Provinces from destruction. Through the imprudent and iniquitous management of those who governed, they were laid open to such disasters as nearly destroyed them, and dissolved the Commonwealth. This would infallibly have happened, had not the Dutch, in the extremity of distress and despair, forced their rulers to have recourse to that measure, which they held in such abhorrence, and which



which their endeavours to avoid only served, as the issue proved, to accelerate.

WILL any honest man in Holland affirm, that this is not a true and faithful picture of the conduct of the Aristocratic party, during its exclusive government of the Republic; and especially at that remarkable period, which preceded the irruption of the French into the Seven Provinces, in the year Sixteen Hundred and Seventy-two?

THERE are in the History of all Countries great and memorable events; designed, as it were, to teach them the principles and policy best suited to their welfare, and by departing from which they will run into difficulties and dangers.

Of this nature are the events above recapitulated. They form a striking lesson to the Dutch, what misfortunes they expose themselves to, should they adopt the maxims of those who ruled over their ancestors at that unpropitious era. They can hardly therefore be too frequently reviewed to their remembrance, and too strongly insisted upon, at a time when there seems an ill-fared propensity in many of them to renew the causes of those horrible calamities with which their country was then afflicted, through the mismanagement resulting from the treachery, the selfishness, and the

imbecility of those who were at the head of their affairs.

If such was the character of those who composed that faction, which is now extolled by the partizans of the Aristocracy with so much vehemence, what reason have we to expect, that were they to succeed in re-establishing it, and in expelling the Stadtholder, Holland will not become, as heretofore, the servile instrument of France, not only to the detriment of the Dutch alone, but also of those of whom it is the natural interest to be connected with them?

SUCH being the case, as, it is apprehended, the premises have sufficiently shewn, how seriously does it behove the wellwishers to the original constitution of the Republic, to maintain it in its primitive form, under which it prospered so wonderfully, and arose in so short a time to such a height of reputation?

THE Stadtholdership is the very essential and constitutive part of that form. Those, therefore, who stand up in its defence, are evidently the true friends to the ancient and real constitution of the Republic, and as such they alone can justly challenge the title of Patriots. By the same rule, all those who oppose it are, strictly speaking, enemies to that constitution, and, in every sense of the word, innovators.

It is hoped, for the sake of the inhabitants of the United Provinces, that they will at length duly consider these important truths; that they will recal to their minds how much their forefathers suffered by acting in contradiction to them; and that it was only by recurring to them in the day of distress, that they recovered from perdition.

MAY that calamitous day never return! May the Dutch be convinced, before it is too late, that a Stadtholder is no less necessary to them, than a King is to the English; and an Aristocracy as pernicious in Holland, as a Commonwealth would be, as it proved once before in England! Let them at the same time open their eyes to the happiness of a connection with a people from whom they have much to expect, and little to fear; and ponder on the peril of siding with a Power of which the ambition is proverbial, and was experienced by their ancestors in such a manner, as ought to remain an everlasting warning to the present and to future generations. Let them reflect, that the strength of this Power is now, thro' the compacts mutually formed between the several potent branches of which it is composed, through intermarriages, alliances, and the greatness of its influence, become more formidable than ever. Let them above all bear in mind, that by exchange of dominion, as already  
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hinted, this Power may extend its territory to their very doors; and then let them decide which of the two is the most preferable and secure, the Friendship of Great Britain, or an Alliance with France.

**F I N I S**

